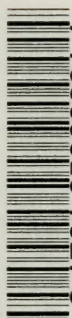
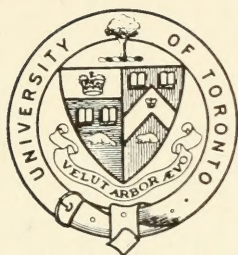


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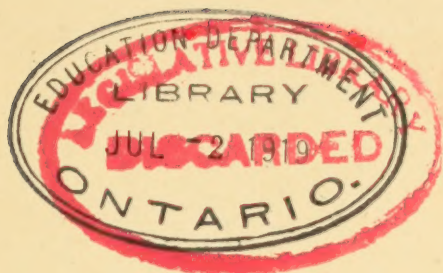
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BALKAN HOME-LIFE

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A TURKISH LADY IN OUTDOOR DRESS

BALKAN HOME-LIFE

BY
LUCY M. J. GARNETT

AUTHOR OF "THE TURKISH PEOPLE"

WITH 10 ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK
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BALKAN HOME-LIFE

CHAPTER I

THE ALBANIANS—THEIR SOCIAL USAGES

ALBANIA, as its native name of *Schyi peri*—the 'Land of Rocks'—signifies, is one of the most mountainous divisions of Turkey. The principal chain runs north and south parallel with the Adriatic, and from it jut innumerable spurs which ramify in every direction. And as many of these are composed of mountains as lofty as the main range, almost the whole surface of the country is covered with rugged hills and deep valleys. The coast also is often grandly mountainous, the spurs here and there terminating in abrupt precipices whose rock-strewn bases are eternally beaten by the waves of the Adriatic.

Almost every variety of climate is found within the limits of Albania. In the south, and near the coast, the temperature is as mild as at Naples, and oranges, citrons, pomegranates, figs, and other fruits grow in abundance. But the cold increases with the distance from the sea, and only twenty miles inland the snowfalls are heavy, and

the frosts severe, the higher and more northern summits being clad in eternal snows. At lower elevations stretch vast forests of pine and other trees, interspersed with the rich pasturages over which great flocks of sheep and herds of cattle roam in summer. The land is cultivated to any considerable extent only in the south, where the climate is more suited to the production of crops and the character of the people to the pursuit of agriculture.

Albania, under Turkish rule, was divided into two *vilayets*, or provinces, designated by the names of their chief towns, Scutari and Ioannina, the residences of the Ottoman Governors. The former division, which is also called Northern Albania, is inhabited chiefly by the Ghegs and Miridites, and the latter by the Tosks, Khams, and Liaps, all of whom, however, are proud to call themselves by the national name of *Schypetar*.

Though nominally brought under the Turkish yoke and partially converted to Islam in the fifteenth century, after a desperate struggle of twenty-five years' duration under the heroic Skanderbeg,¹ the Albanians long maintained a sort of semi-independence. As Moslems, they fought under their own chieftains in the armies of the Sultans, who esteemed them among their bravest soldiers and rewarded their services with numerous privileges and grants of property. The

¹ Iskender Beg—'the Lord Alexander.'

warlike Albanians were consequently never in spirit a conquered race, and the old feudal social system which they were still able to maintain, aided by the nature of their country, made it occasionally possible for their chieftains to throw off, for a time at least, the authority of the Sublime Porte. The most famous of these chieftains were Kara—'Black'—Mohammed of Scutari, and Ali Pasha of Ioannina. The former, at the end of the eighteenth century, aimed at an independent sovereignty which his son, Mustapha Pasha, asserted in open rebellion in 1831; and the latter, notwithstanding the frightful cruelties of which he was guilty, still lives in national tale and song as the mighty upholder of Albanian independence against Ottoman tyranny. Subsequent risings, however, resulted only in the death or banishment of the most influential members of leading families, the last *coup d'état* of this description having been carried out at Prisrend and Uskup in 1881. The great landholders are now all Moslems, the property of which the Christian proprietors were, at the end of last century, despoiled by Ali Pasha having, on his death, been appropriated by the Sultan.

But whether Christian or Moslem, each section of the Albanian nation has its own special traditional laws and usages, and by these alone is its social life regulated; the Miridite tribes claiming to have received theirs from the Dukadjini princes,

who are held to have been the ancestors of their own chieftains. The internal government of these Highlanders may perhaps be best described as a species of aristocratic republic, all matters affecting the community being decided in council by the chiefs, the elders, and other hereditary functionaries.

The dwellings of the Albanians are quite in keeping with the character and mode of life of their occupants. Even at Ioannina, where Albanian domestic and social customs have much in common with those of the Greeks of Epirus, their dwellings present externally a gloomy appearance, being shut in by high walls and courtyard gates, and having no windows to the street on the lower floor ; while, in the more remote towns, the narrow and ill-paved streets look dreary and deserted, and the bazaars and shops are the reverse of attractive. In common with Oriental urban dwellings generally, the houses consist of a ground floor and one upper story only, the latter being usually reached by an outside staircase of unpainted wood covered by the broad pent of the roof which shelters also the landing, or gallery, giving access to these upper rooms. The lime-washed walls of the principal rooms are often decorated with a frieze representing a landscape, executed in monochrome in the crudest possible style ; and between this and the narrow shelf which serves to hold the copper *ibriks*, or coffee-

pots, and other small miscellaneous articles, are usually hung the rich assortment of guns and small arms which constitute the cherished heirlooms of every Albanian family. The rest of the furniture will consist of low divans with very hard and uncompromising cushions, a number of cotton-stuffed mattresses and quilts, a few common chairs and a mirror.

In the mountain districts the houses of the *Beys* or chieftains are complete fortresses, being surrounded by high walls pierced with loopholes for musketry. Only in times of open hostility, however, is it necessary to take any precautions against possible foes, as an Albanian's notion of honour does not allow him to slay a man in his own house, deadly as may be his feud with him. The villages of these districts are generally remote from each other, perched in high and inaccessible situations. The cottages of which they are composed are of one story only, and contain but two rooms, one of which is used as a storehouse for the produce of the little farmstead, the other serving as general living and sleeping apartment. The fire is made on the floor, the smoke escaping through a hole in the roof, the furniture being limited to a few mats and rugs, a *sofra*—the low stand on which meals are served in Turkish fashion, a well-scoured copper pan to mix the meal in, a wooden bowl or two, a few horn spoons, a copper *ibrik* and a brass lamp. Each dwelling has, however, its garden,

well stocked with fruit and vegetables, and its tobacco plot, the whole surrounded by a high loop-holed wall. In the vicinity of every village may also be seen the green, or common, with its paved threshing-floor, on which the golden corn is spread in autumn to be trodden by the hoofs of a pair of horses till the grain is separated from the chaff.

The physical characteristics of the Albanians vary considerably according to the district they inhabit, the tribe to which they belong, and the conditions under which they live. The Schyipetars of the Drin, and the Ghegs and Miridites of North Albania generally are tall, handsome, and well-made folk, their women having good complexions and not infrequently fair hair, which, as the following verse from one of their folk-songs shows, is much admired :—

O maiden so tender,
No pipe of Vizier
Was ever so slender
As thou art, my dear !
The soft silken tresses
Of thy yellow hair,
The glad breeze caresses,
Like flax threads are fair.

They are also dignified in demeanour, capable of undergoing fatigue and hardship, and are exceedingly courageous. The Tosks also have frequently blonde or chestnut hair, blue eyes, and refined features, and are extremely elegant in figure and

deportment. The Khams, on the other hand, rather resemble the Greeks in complexion and feature, having black eyes and hair, and darker skins than the Ghegs. The least handsome of all the Albanians are the Liaps, and the laborious out-of-door life led by their women soon destroys any degree of beauty they may have possessed in youth. Both men and women are, however, expert swimmers and divers, this pastime affording almost their only distraction.

The national costumes of the Albanians are extremely varied and picturesque, and are still rigidly adhered to by all classes. The dress of a Schyipetar lady of rank is extremely rich and costly. Her under-garments will consist of a sleeved gown of striped white gauze, with very full Turkish trousers of red silk drawn in at the ankle, where they are finished off with a *revers* of heavy needlework ; while over these are worn a sleeveless vest and coat reaching to the knees, both of crimson velvet handsomely trimmed round the borders with elaborate gold embroidery. Her hair is divided into three tresses, one of which hangs loosely, the other two being twisted round the little red fez worn on the head, and kept in place by a kerchief of silk ; the dark blue feztassel, which is very full and long, and droops on the left shoulder, being ornamented with tiny discs of gold or with seed-pearls. The Miridite tribeswomen wear a coat of thick white woollen

stuff, red trousers, an embroidered apron with fringe half a yard long, and on the head a blue kerchief. The veil and cloak of the Turkish women is worn out of doors by the Moslem women in the towns, and also, when they live in close proximity to Moslems, by the Christian women. The cloak worn by the latter is, however, of a different shape and of a light red colour, with a cross embroidered in front. This distinctive dress is said to have been imposed by a native pasha, who being attracted by a Christian girl, not knowing her to be such, asked her in marriage and was refused.

The country women, however, both of mountain and plain, and whether Christian or Moslem, go abroad unveiled. Their costumes vary extremely in detail, but are generally of stout homespun and felt, and in form resemble those of the Greek and Bulgarian peasants of Macedonia, the leading features of which are two aprons worn under a coat. In the villages of the plains, however, a blue petticoat, trimmed with red bands, is worn over an embroidered linen gown, confined at the waist by a bodice of white cloth embroidered with quaint designs in black silk thread.

Albanian ladies appear to be even more addicted than Osmanlis to the use of cosmetics. For no sooner are they married than they begin to dye their hair with a decoction made from gall-nuts and palm oil, stain their eyelashes with antimony, and extend their eyebrows till they meet over the

nose. For their skins they use a 'wash' in which various deleterious ingredients enter ; for their lips and cheeks cochineal or carmine, while their nails and the palms of their hands are liberally stained of a deep orange hue with henna.

The social status of Albanian women varies according to district and creed, the Liaps and the Christians of Southern Albania and Epirus generally occupying the least enviable position, as all the hard out-of-door work devolves upon them. The Northern Albanians, on the other hand, as also the Tosks, treat their wives with much greater consideration, consult them willingly in their affairs, both public and private, and accord them a position in the family almost equal to their own. And well do they merit the respect of their husbands and brothers, for full often have they proved themselves to be fit companions for men, unmindful of fatigue, danger, and even death in the cause of liberty. When the armies of the Sultan menaced the privileges of which the people of Scutari had always been proud, it was the women who were the first to give the alarm and urge their men to resist to the death, themselves following to aid in the combat. Restraining the tears natural to their sex, they would carry the mutilated bodies of their loved ones among the combatants in order to excite them to avenge their deaths ; and they are said to have refused to receive back into their homes the husbands and

sons who had for a moment turned their backs upon the enemy.

Albanian women, too, are often entrusted with negotiations for truce or peace. For so great is the respect with which Albanians regard their women that they may traverse the camps of belligerents with greater safety than men. The terms of such treaties of peace, too, are often discussed in the privacy of the harems of the chieftains by the women belonging to the hostile parties before being settled in the camps of the belligerents. More ready are they, however, as a rule, to espouse and take part in the quarrels of their male relatives than to act as peacemakers; and, owing to their practice of carrying arms, they are always ready for a fray. Miss Mackenzie relates that, when traversing the Pass of Kat-chanik, her attention was directed by her escort to two Albanian women whom they chanced to meet. 'Look at them,' he cried; 'they are women worth looking at, for well do they know how to handle a gun!'

'Are they Moslems?' asked the traveller.

'Assuredly.'

'But they do not wear the veil.'

'Not they, indeed,' was the reply. 'They have never worn it, and why should they?—for they are fiercer and more unapproachable than men!'

Such being the character of the Albanian women, it is not surprising that they have played

a considerable part in the history of their country. It was, indeed, to the indomitable energy and courageous spirit of his mother, Khamko, that Ali Pasha, the 'Lion of Ioannina,' owed the earlier successes that paved the way for his subsequent brilliant career. Ali, who had during his father's lifetime been a wild and intractable boy, appears at his death to have submitted with the utmost docility to the authority of his mother. This lady, who was the daughter of a Bey of Konitza, and connected with some of the best Tosk families, had not, until the death of her husband placed the responsibility for the well-being of the family in her hands, given any signs of the extraordinary strength of character and readiness of resource which afterwards distinguished her, qualities which were, however, sullied by an implacability which only too nearly resembled that displayed by Olympias, the mother of Alexander, herself a native of the same province of Epirus.

'To my mother,' said the tyrant of Ioannina, on one occasion, to the French Consul-General—'to my mother I owe everything, for my father left me but a mere hovel and a few fields. My imagination, fired by the counsels of her who had twice given me birth—for she has made me both a *man* and a *vizier*—revealed to me the secret of my destiny.' The hereditary enemies of the family having taken advantage of its head being a minor by seizing upon some of his lands, Khamko

suddenly exchanged the distaff for the sword, and gathering around her the partisans of her house, with those among her late husband's vassals who still remained faithful, she tried in various skirmishes her strength against that of the enemies of her family. In these raids she was accompanied by her young son, to whom she pointed out the lands of which he had been despoiled, and the estates of the despoilers. Braving every danger, the *Aghadina*, as Khamko was called by her followers, continued to harass her enemies by open hostility or secret intrigue until she was finally taken in an ambuscade by the men of Gardiki and Tchormovo, together with Ali and her only daughter, Shainitza. After having been subjected to every indignity and outrage by their captors, Khamko and her children had finally the good fortune to be ransomed by the generosity of a Greek merchant for the sum of 22,800 piastres (£3,700).

Hatred of those who had thus humiliated her had now taken entire possession of the Aghadina's soul, and her one idea thenceforward was to train up her son as the avenger of her wrongs. With this object she commenced to instil into his mind those pernicious principles which he was only too well disposed to receive, and which may be summed up in the words 'Might is Right'—an adage sufficiently popular among the turbulent Albanian clans. Ali's first attempt to vindicate his rights in the field proved, however, a complete failure. Having met with a more vigorous

resistance than he expected, he fled from the fight, and was one of the first to re-enter Tepeleni. Khamko, furious at finding all her hopes frustrated by what she deemed her son's cowardice, loaded him with reproaches, and thrusting her distaff into his hand, added, 'Go, coward, and spin with the women in the harem ; thou art fitter for that than for the career of arms !' Ali's fortunes indeed, at that period, fluctuated for some time between success and failure. While he was absent on a campaign, Khamko found herself on her death-bed, and, though repeated and urgent messages were despatched to him, the Aghadina's turbulent spirit had passed away before he could arrive. In her will she bequeathed to her son and daughter the task of immolating to her manes the inhabitants of Gardiki and Tchormovo, at whose hands the family had suffered such unpardonable indignities ; and over their mother's dead body the brother and sister swore to exterminate her enemies to the last man.

Some years later Shainitza was grieving for the death of her favourite son, Aden Bey ; and so wild was her sorrow that she smashed with a hammer all his and her own diamond ornaments, burnt all her cashmeres and valuable furs, and forced his young widow to sleep on the hard straw mats of the floor. The mirrors and ornaments of her *serail* were also destroyed, its doors and shutters were painted black, and everything which in any way recalled joy or happiness was banished

from the palace. Roused at length from this abandonment of grief by the news of the fall of Gardiki, she wrote to her brother reminding him of the oath they had sworn together over their mother's corpse, and of her wrongs and theirs, and urged him to have no mercy on the inhabitants of that town. 'As for me,' she added in conclusion, 'it is only on cushions stuffed with the hair of the women of Gardiki that Shainitza will henceforward repose !'

Faithfully was the terrible oath, sworn to the dead, kept both by brother and sister. The chief men of Gardiki, to the number of some three hundred, induced by fair promises to meet Ali at the Khan of Valieré, were there ruthlessly massacred by the Christian troops under his Greek lieutenant, Thanasé Vaghia, not one escaping. Shainitza then caused the town to be razed to the ground; and, after cutting off the hair of the women with every insult which she could heap upon them, this tigress in human form drove them forth with their children to the mountains, menacing with a like doom any who should venture to give food or shelter to the objects of her wrath. And the traveller, passing through the valley of Drynopolis, may to this day see in the wall of the khan the tablet which records, in letters of gold, the number of the dead and the date of their sacrifice to the manes of the mother and the fury of the sister of the Vizier of Ioannina.

In a codicil to her will, Khamko had directed that a *hadji*, or pilgrim, should be despatched on her part to lay offerings on the tomb of the Prophet, and pray there for the repose of her soul. Such pilgrimages and offerings may, however, only be made when the expenses are defrayed with money lawfully and honestly acquired. And as it was found on inquiry into the estate of the late Veli Bey, Ali's ancestor, that the property to be sold for this purpose had been taken by force or fraud from a Christian, this proposed pilgrimage was disallowed by the local religious authorities.

Such extreme ferocity of disposition as that manifested by Khamko and Shainitza is, however, happily exceptional among Albanian women, and even in Ali Pasha's own household was one whose character stands out in striking contrast to theirs. This was the Vizier's favourite wife, Emineh, the daughter of the Pasha of Delvino, a chieftain whose ruthless cruelty had gained for him the surname of 'the Tiger,' but who had fallen a victim to Ali's ambition. In the dirges sung by the Liaps on the death of the latter this lady is described as 'the gentle hind of Mount Pelagos'; and her sympathy for the victims of the Vizier's rancour brought about her own untimely and tragical end.

For when the news arrived at Ioannina of the fall of Souli, Emineh, touched with the story of the heroism of its defenders, fell at the Vizier's

feet imploring his clemency on their behalf. 'O *Effendi*!' she cried, clasping his knees, 'deign to listen to thy most devoted slave, and be not insensible to her tears! Thy Fate has warned me in a dream that it will be well for thee to spare the Souliotes!'

'The Souliotes!' exclaimed the Vizier, in a voice of thunder—'the Souliotes! Darest thou intercede for my worst enemies and not tremble for thyself?'

'*Effendi*,' replied the brave woman, rising with dignified firmness—'*Effendi*, remember that I am the daughter of a Pasha. Yea, I dare intercede for them, and, moreover, dare to tell thee that their blood, and the blood of my unhappy father, which thou didst shed whilst I was yet a child, will be upon thy head!'

'And upon thine also,' replied the Vizier, beside himself with fury. Drawing from his girdle a pistol, he discharged it at his wife, who, falling in a swoon, was carried by her slaves into the *haremlık*. Ali, believing that he had killed her, and overcome with grief and remorse, shut himself up in his most private apartments until he was informed by his physician that Emineh was not even wounded, but had merely fainted from emotion. His mind thus relieved, the tyrant shed tears, and, with all his tenderness for his favourite wife revived, proceeded to her apartment, which—admittance being from fear refused him—he

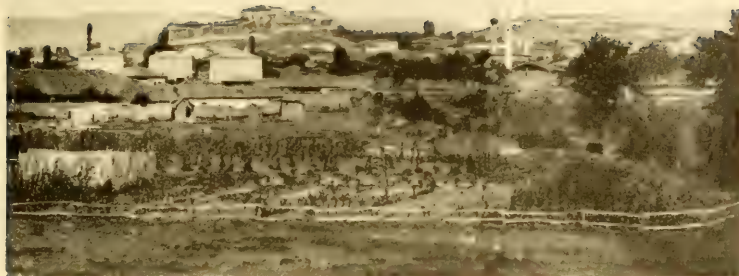
entered by force. But this further shock proved fatal to the tender Emineh, who expired during the night in a state of delirium.

The death of Emineh proved a terrible blow to her murderer. Her memory perpetually haunted him, whether seated at the festal board or presiding in the council chamber, and, above all, during the silent watches of the night. He feared to be left alone, and was frequently heard by his pages to start up, and exclaim : ‘ Emineh !—it is she !—it is she ! Save me from her vengeance ! ’ And when, some years later, a Dervish, Sheikh Youssouf, boldly reproving the Vizier for his crimes and cruelties, pointed out from the window the tomb of the murdered Emineh, he was interrupted by Ali, who exclaimed, with tears : ‘ Stop, stop, my father ! Thou hast named the name of Emineh ! Let that suffice and overwhelm me not with the weight of thy maledictions ! ’

CHAPTER II

ALBANIAN MANNERS AND MORALS

AN account of the Albanians would hardly be complete without some mention of the terrible blood-feuds which, though often originating in the most trifling causes, not infrequently result in great loss of life, and are occasionally handed down from generation to generation. Sometimes such feuds exist between individuals or families only ; at others, whole villages, or clans, are concerned in them. In carrying them on certain traditional rules are, however, punctiliously adhered to, and occasionally those concerned, finding the state of continual hostility irksome, may agree to a *bessa*, or truce, for a stipulated period. When entire clans take part in the feud, each keeps strictly to its own wells or fountains, its public ovens and its markets. These internecine dissensions, however, rarely interrupt the usual occupations of a district, the land being tilled and the flocks pastured as usual in the daytime, the combatants assembling for the fray at evening on the common, or in the market-place of the town or village. When a few men have bitten the dust, the hostile parties with-



USKUP, MACEDONIA



OLD STONE BRIDGE AT USKUP

draw in order to bury their dead, and the battle is over for the time being.

Though women are not the principals in these *vendetta*, it is no uncommon thing for them to take part in the bloody frays to which they give rise, and for which their custom of carrying arms makes them always ready. Lady Blunt describes¹ a combat of this description which took place in the neighbourhood of Uskup (Skopia), the cause of contention being merely a hare, to which two sportsmen laid equal claim. As neither would give in, it was decided that the case should be tried by combat on the village green. The duel, however, soon became a general *mêlée*, relatives and friends joining the principals, and women fighting by the side of their husbands and brothers. One girl of seventeen, the sister of one of the sportsmen, fought, it is said, with a desperation and success worthy of a better cause, and fourteen victims fell in the affray, thus perpetuating the feud among the survivors.

On another occasion, the breaking of a girl's pitcher at the fountain by two mischievous boys resulted in such a desperate quarrel between her friends and theirs that some sixty persons perished in the ensuing feud. It is said, however, that even on such occasions as these the men refrain, as far as possible, from striking or wounding their adversaries of the other sex, the Albanian code of

¹ *The People of Turkey*, Vol. i. p. 81.

honour making it impossible to attack a woman, whether armed or unarmed. And the sacredness attached to their persons extends also to those whom they take under their protection. For, escorted by a girl only, travellers may safely pass through the wildest parts of the country, and a man may cross, without fear, the lands of one with whom he is at feud, if he have the safe-conduct of a woman belonging to his enemy's family. To such an extent, indeed, is respect for women carried by the Albanians, that it is contrary to their notions of propriety ever to make women the subject of jokes or humorous stories; and insult or annoyance offered to a girl, or the carrying off of one without the consent of her parents, almost invariably results in bitter feuds between families, or fierce battles between tribes. And, as with most mountain people, the moral code is with the Schyipetars exceedingly strict. Among many of the tribes any lapse from virtue on the part of a woman is punished with death, a subsequent marriage not being allowed to condone the fault, while the penalty of adultery is of equally Draconic severity. The unfaithful wife is placed up to her shoulders in a pit, and then literally buried under a heap of stones, which are piled upon and around her; and her husband has a right to slay the partner of her guilt wherever he may find him. Such cases are, however, of extremely rare occurrence.

Considering this rigidity of morals it is a rather curious fact that two clans, or tribes—the Clementi and the Castrati—ascribe their origin to irregular connections between the daughters of shepherds and strangers from other countries. The stories are almost identical. That of the Clementi is as follows :—

A young man named Clement, clerk to a priest of Moratcha, a district of Montenegro, weary of the tyranny of his superior, ran away, and, not knowing which way to go, made for the road leading from Selze to Scutari. Arriving at a place called Tamara, he came upon a flockmaster of Triepsei, who, astonished to see a youth dressed as he was in such a place, inquired his business there. Without disclosing whence he came, Clement related his misfortunes, and declared his intention of going to Scutari in order to seek service with some family of position. Touched with **pity**, and fearing for him the dangers of the way, the shepherd invited the stranger to stay with him and help him to keep his flocks. Clement accepted the offer ; and when the number of sheep he was to receive as wages was settled, he followed his new master home.

The shepherd was rich in flocks and lands, possessed of a second wife with a young family, and also of a grown-up daughter, Bubce, who was both plain of feature and lame. Clement, being young and active and also attentive to his new

duties, soon gained the affections of his master, and, at the same time, those of his daughter, who, seeing no chance of ever being asked in marriage by her equal, took it into her head to make the shepherd lad fall in love with her. Clement long resisted the allurements of the uncomely Bubce, and on his pointing out to her the danger they would both run should any understanding between them come to her father's ears, and also the misery that would follow a union with a penniless man, the shrewd Bubce would reply: 'It is not our danger, but my deformity that thou fearest,' and her devotion finally touching the heart of Clement, the lovers began to meet frequently in secret. Finding herself compelled to take her step-mother into her confidence, the latter, fearing that her husband's pride would impel him to some act of violence were the state of affairs to come suddenly to his knowledge, tried to prepare him for the news, and made him swear by St. Nicholas not to do harm to any one. The angry father, in spite of his oath, at first threatened to kill both his daughter and her lover, and reproached them bitterly for the dishonour they had brought upon his house. Bubce, however, took all the blame upon herself; and her tears and prayers, joined to those of his wife, who reminded him of the oath he had sworn 'by St. Nicholas'—of all oaths the most binding on an Albanian—finally prevailed with him. Clement might

marry the girl, but on condition that neither of them ever again should appear before him. So the couple retired to the pasturages of Beston, which the shepherd gave to his daughter, taking with him the sheep which constituted Clement's wages. Here they settled down and prospered, leaving behind them great wealth in flocks and numerous descendants; and at the present day the tribe of the Clementi number five hundred families.

It is, however, among the Miridite highlanders that social morality is pushed to its extremest limit. Though their women enjoy the greatest freedom, an unmarried girl may not, out of doors, speak to a man unrelated to her family without risking the loss of her reputation, a calamity which few would care to survive. M. Hecquard¹ cites a case in point, related to him by a local *abbé*, which well illustrates the value that an Albanian girl sets on her honour. A man happened to remark in joke to a girl, the sister of one of his friends, and before several other persons, that he had seen her in conversation with a young man, whose name he mentioned. On the following Easter Sunday, when all the tribe were congregated, the girl, who was under fifteen, on leaving the church after partaking, as is customary on that day, of the Eucharist, called God to witness to her innocence, and seizing a pistol from one of

¹ *La Hauts Albanie.*

her relatives, shot herself through the heart ; and two days afterwards, the man whose careless words had been the cause of the tragedy fell by the hand of the victim's brother.

Among the Albanians exogamy, or marriage outside the tribe, is the general rule, which is occasionally carried out by the Miridite chieftains to the extent of carrying off by force a woman from one of the neighbouring Moslem tribes. The wives of the principal inhabitants of Oroshi have, it is said, all been acquired in this way ; and far from resenting or being ashamed of the circumstance, they are on the contrary proud of it, and their relatives accept the situation on payment of the usual dowry. And although these stolen brides may not embrace with enthusiasm the faith into which they are generally baptized as a preliminary to marriage, they, nevertheless, scrupulously observe its external forms, are much devoted to their husbands, of whose reputation and honour they are so jealous that, should occasion require, they are found ready either to defend or avenge it.

Among these exogamous tribes, succession is, as a rule, in the male line. If, however, there are no surviving sons, and a daughter chooses to remain single, she may enjoy the usufruct of her father's property, which on her death reverts to her nearest male relatives. If a man die childless, his property is divided among his male relatives

who pay to his widow a pension, she having the option of remaining in his house or returning to her family, and retaining all that she has received from her parents either before or after her marriage. If the deceased husband has an unmarried brother, the latter has a right to marry the widow. In such an event she receives from him on the wedding-day the present of an ox, or its equivalent—four goats. If, however, a widow returns home and marries into another family, her father pays to her first husband's heirs, or to her son if she have one, half the dowry promised at her second betrothal. With the exception of her deceased husband's brother, a woman may not, however, re-marry in the same village without the consent of his relatives. In the mountains of Pulati this is never given, and should it be dispensed with a vendetta inevitably follows. If the betrothed man die, his brother has also the right to marry the betrothed maiden, but must pay to her parents, in addition to the dowry already promised, a hundred and fifty piastres.

An Albanian has a legal right to beat his wife if she misconducts herself, but this right is little exercised except among the Liaps, who are the rudest and most brutal of all the Albanian tribes. He must, however, be careful not to draw blood even in the most trifling degree; for if a wife receive even a mere scratch in the course of a castigation, she complains to her parents, who

cite the husband before the authorities. The penalty consists chiefly in the payment of a considerable fine, which becomes the private property of the woman abused.

Divorce is not uncommon among the Moslem Albanians, who follow in this respect the customs of the Ottomans, the husband giving to the discarded wife the sum specified in the marriage contract in view of such a contingency. The divorce generally takes place at the instance of the husband, but the wife may also claim it for a limited number of reasons. If, for instance, a man has left his native town or village, and does not return within the period fixed by the Kadi, his wife may claim to be released from her vows to him. Other sufficient causes for divorce are ill-treatment, aberration of mind, and excessive corpulence on the part of the husband.

The Moslem Albanian, when he marries, is, like the Osmanli, bound to provide his wife with food, clothes, and shelter in keeping with his position and means, and cannot, like his Christian neighbour, require her to earn money for herself or for him by her labour. She, on her side, is required to obey her husband in all things, and never oppose his wishes, to abstain from anything likely to annoy or vex him, and to watch over the interests of the family. If he be poor she must do the work of the house, cook the food, do the dairy work, and spin the wool and flax necessary for the



ALBANIAN PEASANT WOMAN IN GAI A DRESS



ALBANIAN GAJASES

family use. The Albanian peasant generally has no fondness for field labour, which he usually leaves to the women, children, and old men, and, when he does not follow the calling of a soldier or trader, prefers wood-cutting, attending to his vineyard, or, still more, tending sheep on the mountains, a pursuit which combines laziness with a possibility of exciting adventure.

Besides the considerable number of Albanians who have hitherto entered the military service of Turkey as volunteers, a very considerable section of the population have been in the habit of seeking fortune in the large towns of Turkey, as traders, artisans, cavasses,¹ etc. As soon as they have amassed sufficient money to enable them to do so, they return home and marry, in order to prove themselves respectable members of society. After a brief sojourn in the bosom of their families they return to their employment, leaving their young wives in charge of their parents. For with the Schyipetars, as with the majority of Oriental peoples, patriarchal customs still survive, and all the sons bring home their brides to the paternal roof, there to remain in subjection to the parents-in-law until they shall themselves be heads of families.

The highest aspiration of an Albanian wife is to be the mother of boys, and she is less proud of

¹ A kind of orderly attached to Embassies, Consulates, banks, and other public offices, in which capacity they are much esteemed for their devotion to their employers.

her own beauty and the rank of her family than of the number of her sons and of their valour. The mother of many boys is sure of the lasting affection of her husband, enjoys the respect and consideration of the rest of his family, and wields great authority in the household to which she has come as a stranger ; and as her sons never permanently leave the paternal roof, she may look forward to their support and affection in her old age, and to see their children growing up around her. When her husband leaves the paternal home for a sojourn at a distance, custom requires that a young wife should manifest no grief at his departure. Instead of accompanying him to the threshold, and watching his familiar figure disappear in the distance, or going to meet him on his return, she hides herself both at the moment of his arrival and of his departure. ' A woman's tears must not,' say the elders, ' soften a man's heart when his duty lies before him.' Neither must they ask for news of their husbands at any time during their absence. Yet in the depth of their hearts no wives more regret the absence of their young spouses, as the touching little superstitious observances with which they console themselves testify. Unknown to their partners, they sew in their clothes small objects which they themselves have worn, as talismans to ensure their safe return ; and during their often protracted absences they resort to various methods of divination, either with or

without the aid of a professional wise woman, in order to discover how their beloved husbands fare, where they sojourn, and how they are occupied.

The men on their side are not free from homesickness, and many are the pathetic little exile-songs in which their longings for their native mountains and for the beloved ones from whom they are, for a time, separated, find expression. One may serve as a specimen :—

Now in Bender, now in Buda,
Bide we lone and desolate,
Patience, heart ! What boots complaining ?—
So it hath been willed by Fate.

Yet this grievous bitter exile
Cannot longer still be borne ;
Is't naught that we like felons wander
From Fatherland as outlaws lorn ?

Who the exile's griefs can number ?
Say whose woes can equal mine ?
E'en the viper, should she sting me,
Poisoned by my blood would pine !

The amusements of Albanian women are, for the most part, limited to birth and wedding festivities, at which singing and dancing are the principal features. Albanian dances are of two kinds : the Pyrrhic, as it is called by travellers, which is usually indulged in by the men, and a kind of ' kerchief dance,' which is affected by the women, for the sexes always perform separately. The women dance in couples, holding each other with one hand while they execute a step not

particularly graceful, composed of shuffles and leaps, waving at the same time over their heads a kerchief, or scarf, with their disengaged hand. Another dance of a pantomimic character is sometimes performed at weddings for the amusement of the company. Three masked men, in the characters of a man, his wife, and his servant, perform a burlesque representing the weakness of man and the unfaithfulness of woman. The husband expresses by gesture his despair at seeing his wife make eyes at the wedding guests, while her servant, armed with a broom in lieu of a gun, threatens to shoot her mistress's lovers.

The Albanian nation has been described as 'without a literature, without art, and almost without a history.'¹ Their language, which is difficult to learn and difficult to pronounce, is a complete mosaic of fragments borrowed from many sources, though a native element naturally predominates. Greek and Turkish words abound, and many of Slav and Latin origin have become part of the vernacular. The language of the Schyipetars is also divided between the two dialects spoken respectively by the Tosks and the Ghegs, though there is no well-defined line of demarcation between them. The purest Albanian is said to be spoken at Elbassan, the inhabitants of which, according to the native saying :—

Turk of Stambolhit (Constantinople),
Schype of Elbassanit,

¹ Dozon, *Manuel de la Langue Chkipe*.

are looked upon as representative Schyipetars. The total neglect of the mother tongue has been due in great measure to the profession of three creeds by the Albanian people, Turkish only being taught in the Moslem schools, Italian in the Roman Catholic, and in the Orthodox Christian, Greek. The only section of the Albanians who can boast of any degree of culture are the Khams, and even this is not indigenous, but is borrowed entirely from the Epirote Greeks of Ioannina and its neighbourhood.

The education of the vast majority of Albanian girls, whether Moslem or Christian, is still of a purely domestic character, and, with the exception of a small number of Gheg and Tosk maidens of the better class, who are taught a little reading and writing and a great deal of etiquette by old lady *hodjas*, they are entirely unlettered. From the age of twelve to the time of their marriage, which generally takes place before they are sixteen, both Moslem and Christian girls are condemned to complete seclusion from the outer world. The customs of the Christian townsfolk in this respect are, indeed, more rigid than those of the Moslems, for their daughters are not, during this interval, even allowed to present themselves before visitors of their own sex. Time is not, however, allowed to hang heavily upon the hands of a maiden, whatever her position and prospects. For in addition to taking an active part in all

household duties, there is the important task to accomplish of getting ready her trousseau, and this involves first the spinning and weaving of the various stuffs, cotton, linen, woollen, and silken, of which it is to be composed, and, subsequently, their conversion into a multitude of elaborately embroidered garments and household gear.

The peasant and country girls generally, both of the mountains and of the plains, enjoy, as has been seen, much greater liberty than their sisters of the towns. With the exception of the Miridites, a certain amount of social intercourse with members of the other sex is also not denied to them, and, like the Greek and Wallachian maidens, they tend the flocks on the hills, fetch water from the fountain, and lead generally a life of healthy industry.

CHAPTER III

ALBANIAN FAMILY CEREMONIES

THE domestic usages of the Albanians vary but slightly, according to locality and religion, and are, in their main features, identical; and although the customs surrounding such family ceremonies as births, marriages, and deaths belong naturally more to the domain of women than of men, the latter are not less scrupulous in the fulfilment of the part in these observances which falls to their share.

Tribal and family pride being, as has been already seen, the leading feature of Albanian character, the desire of offspring, and especially of male offspring, is naturally very strong with them. A childless man is designated by an expression which signifies 'without a root,' and is looked upon as a most unlucky being. The wish, 'May you be childless!' is also considered the most weighty curse that can be launched against a man by his enemy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the aspiration of every woman's heart is, consequently, to be the mother of a numerous

family of boys, both for the sake of the future prosperity of the tribe and for the present social consideration which their birth ensures to her. When the fact that an Albanian woman is about to become a mother is announced to her husband's family, she becomes thenceforward the object of the most devoted attention on their part, the slightest wish or preference she may express being immediately gratified. Custom, however, forbids her eating certain things, such as pomegranates and snails, and she must not dye her hair more than three times before her baby is born, or some unlucky accident would be sure to happen either to her or to the infant.

As soon as the baby is born it is washed, and a sickle, with which straw has just been cut, is laid for a few seconds on its stomach—to prevent colics. The maternal grandmother, whose privilege it is to perform this office for the baby, then proceeds to swathe its little body tightly in broad swaddling bands of white woollen stuff, and finally deposits it in a narrow wooden cradle. A jar of water is taken to the *Hodja* or the *Papas*—according to the creed of the mother—to be blessed, and with a part of its contents all the women who officiated at the birth wash their hands. The rest of the water is placed near the mother's couch, and all the women who visit her during the five ensuing days dip their fingers in it and sprinkle her, expressing at the same time a wish that she

may have a plentiful supply of milk for the baby, Albanian women making a point of nursing their own children. The relatives are now admitted to felicitate the mother and admire the baby, with the exception of its father, whom custom obliges to keep out of the way and refrain from seeing his child until it is eight days old. The mother is presently placed on a state bed, over which a magnificently embroidered silk coverlet is spread, the national head-dress, ornamented with sequins, being placed on her head, and all her necklaces hung round her neck. She is now ready to receive the friends and acquaintances who at once arrive in crowds to offer their congratulations. In some parts of Albania, and especially among the Moslems, it was formerly customary to bring handsome and costly presents to the infant. As each visitor did her best to outshine her neighbour in the value of her gift, this usage became at length, among the Roman Catholic Miridites, so ruinously expensive that the ban of the Church was finally laid upon it. The visitors to the mother and baby consequently now bring with them only an egg, with which they rub the face of the new arrival, saying, '*Pashi bar*—May it be always white!' i.e. never have cause to blush for its actions.

When the baby is three days old the Fates are believed to arrive and decide what its fortune is to be. When two of the Weird Sisters have had

their say, the third speaks, and her decision is final. On the evening of this day—which is called the child's *Poganik*—all the relatives of the family assemble uninvited, each bringing a small loaf, a girdle cake, and a wooden flask of wine. On these simple viands they feast and drink healths to the mother and child, the formula addressed to the latter being : ' May he have strong legs ! ' The women then set to work to make a large cake, all present touching—' for luck '—the sieve used to sift the flour. As the dough is being kneaded coins are put into it, and when baked it is broken in pieces over the infant. In the case of a boy all now touch the cradle while they sing :—

Poganik !—When the boy grows a man,
A weaver we'll make him,
And money he'll bring us ! ¹

And for a girl :—

Poganik !—When our girl grows up tall,
She shall go to the valley,
And bring us much water !

The company now separate, each person carrying home with her a piece of the *Poganik* cake, which is believed to possess beneficial qualities, and distributes it among the members of her household. When all have left, honey, milk and other

¹ Weaving was formerly a trade in high repute with the artisan class of Albanians, who left their homes to work in the towns where it was carried on.

delicacies are laid out for the refection of the Fateful Three, the dogs are shut up, and the courtyard gate left open.

Until the baby is forty days old neither mother nor child must leave the house, nor, after sunset, the room, for fear of "Those Without." During this period the fire is carefully kept up, and an ember of it must on no account be given to a neighbour, or all kinds of evil will ensue; and whoever has occasion to enter the house after nightfall must leap over a firebrand laid on the threshold. Music and singing are also rigidly refrained from for fear of attracting these dreaded Powers of the Air.

The ceremony of naming the child is performed by the Christian Albanians according to the baptismal rite of the churches to which they respectively belong. With the Moslems no religious character is attached to giving the baby a name, the eldest male relative of the family fulfilling this duty for its youngest member. If, however, the child is a boy, the curious and interesting ceremony of cutting its hair is performed when it is a week old. The father invites to fulfil this office for his child the man he most esteems, be he Moslem or Christian, and a bond of friendship is thus formed, called 'the St. Nikolo,' similar in its character to the *pobratim* of the Slavs, or the 'brotherhood-bond' of the Greeks, and also partaking in its assumed relationship of the nature

of the tie between a Greek *Nono* and the family of his godchild. This substitute for a godfather—who is considered a near relative, and may enter the women's apartments—cuts off with a pair of scissors some of the baby's hair in the form of a tonsure, and puts the lock, together with some coins, in a purse which is kept closed for three days. At the end of that period the money is taken out, and the hair is thrown into the fire.

A similar practice is observed by the Roman Catholic Miridites on the first anniversary of a boy's birth, with the difference that it is performed under the auspices of St. John, instead of those of St. Nicholas.

Although the Albanian Beys, or chieftains, have neither written charters, nor armorial bearings and insignia, matrimonial alliances between their families are regulated with the most rigid observance of rank and precedence. Their wives and mothers, like women generally, are well up in all the degrees of kinship and descent, and the preliminaries of betrothals are usually settled by them in the harem before they are submitted to the head of the family and communicated to the parties most nearly interested. Children are frequently betrothed before they are ten years of age, and occasionally while still in the cradle. In such cases, however, the arrangement is kept secret from the couple until the young man is in a

position to marry, this usage being intended to prevent Albanian youths marrying in the towns to which they resort for employment. A refusal on the part of a young man to fulfil an engagement made for him by his parents would inevitably result not only in a vendetta with the relatives of the rejected bride, but also in social ostracism ; but such cases are extremely rare. For, as a bridegroom elect has, as a rule, never beheld the bride chosen for him, he can have no reason for refusing to marry her.

Women in Albania being, as in the Balkans generally, less numerous than men, it is not customary to require a portion with the bride, who, on the contrary, as among the Wallachs and Bulgarians, is practically purchased from her father or brothers for a sum of money varying according to the wealth and standing of the respective families. The parents of the maiden, however, besides providing the materials for her trousseau, supply her with various articles of jewellery and a certain amount of household plenishing, the bridegroom supplying the rest.

With the exception of the nuptial benediction, the marriage customs of the Christian and Moslem Albanians are similar, and there is very little difference in the songs by which they are accompanied. Among the Moslems the betrothal takes place in the presence of the *Kadi*. This legal functionary receives the declaration of mutual consent,

made on the part of the maiden by her natural guardians as her proxies, who undertake to prove it by the mouth of two Moslem witnesses. After a prayer for the benediction of Allah on the union, a contract is drawn up enumerating the articles to be given to the bride by her parents, and stipulating the sum to be paid to her by the husband in the event of his divorcing her. To this document the Kadi and the witnesses affix their seals, and this ceremony constitutes the legal marriage.

As with the Osmanlis, the bride remains, however, in the house of her parents until the wedding festivities have taken place, the interval ranging in duration from a few weeks to a year, according to the convenience of the bridegroom's family. As the ceremonies observed in Epirus present so many points of similarity with those of the Greeks, I will here describe only those belonging to Upper Albania which present features peculiar to themselves.

The festivities invariably begin on Thursday with a sending of the *dunti* by the bridegroom. This is the decorated box containing the presents to the bride of various articles of dress and ornament, including boots and shoes of yellow leather embroidered with gold, together with a loaf of sugar, some coffee, and other customary trifles. The *dunti* is carried by two boys belonging to the bridegroom's family, neither of whom must be

orphans. As they arrive at the house the women and girls sing a song beginning :—

O flaxen one, far whiter,
 Than foam on Drin's wave-crest,
 — sends to thee the *dunti*,
 Within a golden chest !

The boys are received at the foot of the staircase by the assembled family and conducted with every mark of respect to the reception-room on the upper floor, where the *dunti* is placed on a coffer, while all present cry, '*Per heir*'—'Good luck !' The hosts remain standing until the envoys have been seated in the place of honour, when refreshments, consisting of liqueurs and bonbons, are served twice in succession, complimentary speeches being exchanged meanwhile ; and after about an hour of polite attentions, the envoys depart. On the same day a youth is despatched by the bridegroom's parents to invite the wedding guests for the following Monday. The formula he makes use of is—'So-and-so is to be married, and begs you to come on next Monday to the wedding with your family, or, if you prefer it, let the head of the family come alone.' At each house he receives in return for his invitation a present of a few piastres. The number of persons invited from each family is fixed according to the degree of kinship or friendship existing between them and the bridegroom's family.

The bride's family send out their invitations in the same way on the Friday. On this day, too, the matrons assemble to help in the preparations for the ceremony. While some busy themselves with putting finishing touches to the trousseau, or helping in the kitchen, the others take the bride in hand and commence to 'busk' her for the occasion. Compelled by custom to submit silently to whatever operation they may, in their zeal to make her as beautiful as possible, subject her, the poor bride is bathed, scrubbed, 'massaged,' and *dépilée*, her hair and eyebrows are dyed black, and her feet and hands stained red with henna.

On Sunday evening the bride, wearing her wedding-dress and decked in all her ornaments, is presented to the women of the family. If she is of a humble station, jewels are borrowed for her to wear for the occasion, so that, on this day at least, she may lack nothing. The work of the matrons who have dressed her is then freely and openly criticized, no word, however, being uttered which could possibly hurt the feelings of the bride; for—according to the good ladies of Scutari—a bride can never be otherwise than beautiful. Later on the father and brothers enter, and the maiden, throwing herself at their feet, asks their pardon with tears for all the faults she has committed during her childhood. Hardly has the father raised her than a chorus of sobs and cries is heard from all the company, who thus testify their

sorrow at the approaching separation of the girl from her family. The situation is, however, speedily relieved by the youngest matron present, who now raises her voice in song.

Early on Monday, the homes of both bride and bridegroom are thronged with guests, sometimes to the number of several hundreds, the head of each family contributing an oka¹ of coffee and another of sugar for the benefit of the house. Each matron as she is ushered into the reception-room presents a gold coin to the bride who, arrayed in all her wedding finery, stands in a corner, motionless and speechless, with downcast eyes and hands crossed on her breast. These coins, the value of which varies with the degree of relationship of the giver, are subsequently strung into necklaces, and constitute part of the personal property of a married woman.

A couple of matrons posted on either side of the maiden now keep watch and ward over her, and the rest of the female guests, seated round the room on the divans, stare at the poor girl as if she were the idol of their worship. At meal-times, on this and the following days, the bride eats alone, covered with a veil, though if desirous of making a good impression she will partake of food only if compelled to do so, in order to show how great is her regret at leaving the paternal roof. Her behaviour, indeed, throughout the various stages

¹ About 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. avoirdupois.

of the wedding ceremonies is intended to typify her reluctance to exchange the single for the married state. Meantime the guests divert themselves with liqueurs, coffee, and sweets, and the performances of the professional musicians hired for the occasion.

About ten o'clock a cart leaves the bridegroom's abode to fetch the bride's baggage, which is packed in a large wooden box ornamented with designs of flowers rudely executed. As it starts all the assembled company cry '*Per heir!*'—'Good luck!' and among the Christian Albanians several women follow the vehicle into the road, sprinkling both it and the wedding-chest with holy water as a protection from 'Those Without.' A few minutes afterwards, all the male guests invited by the bridegroom's friends set out, preceded by his father, who leads a richly caparisoned horse on which the bride will ride home. As they leave the house the women sing :—

Happy may thy journey be,
Patriarch of our family !
Holy sign of Cross now make,
To the right thy way then take.
If to us thou bring fair bride,
May the sugar-plums taste sweet,
If a foul one by thy side,
That they bitter taste were meet.

Arrived at their destination, the party range themselves around the courtyard, where glasses

of cognac and water, and sweets and sugar-plums of various kinds are handed round by men-servants. During this ceremony, which every one endeavours to prolong, the bride, enveloped in a long cloak and covered with a veil, is led downstairs. She walks as slowly as possible, supported on either hand by an attendant as if infirm, and is hidden from all eyes by silken draperies held on either side of her path until she has been seated on her horse. The procession then starts. The husband's guests walk first, then comes the bride, her horse led by a servant, guarded on either side by her brothers. Behind follow the musicians and singers, and the rear is brought up by a great concourse of relatives and friends. On leaving the door of her childhood's home, and at every street corner she passes, the bride inclines her head three times in token of farewell to the places she will never again, as a maiden, behold.¹

Arrived at the bridegroom's home, the same precautions are taken in dismounting the bride as were observed in placing her upon her horse. The women of the house come down to receive her, and, pushing her gently, lead her, as if against her will, into the nuptial chamber, where she is seated on cushions. When coffee has been served and

¹ This observance may possibly have its origin in the propitiatory farewells paid by a bride, among the ancient Slavs, to her father's household gods. Compare Kovalevsky, *Modern Customs . . . of Russia*, pp. 33-4.

partaken of, the bride's friends take their leave, the eldest among them saying in a loud voice :—

‘ Until now she belonged to God and to us, now and henceforward she belongs to you and to God, who will protect her ! ’

As they retire, the last message of the bride to her mother is sung :—

Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay !
A word to you the bride would say.
Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay !
My greetings to my mother bear,
My greetings to my sisters fair,
Tell them my heart will love them e'er.
Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay !
Each day, when comes the even glow,
My prayers, on winds that softly blow,
For them to God on high shall go—
Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay !

As soon as the bride's relatives have left, the women raise her veil with the silver handle of a dagger, or some other object made of the same metal, to which magical properties are attributed, and whether she comes up to their expectations or not, they are in duty bound to join in a song extolling her charms. And however plain the bride when unveiled may prove to be, no sign of disgust or annoyance is manifested, though should she be afflicted with any definite physical deformity such as lameness, blindness, or a humped back, the husband may claim an indemnity from her parents, or—if prepared to abide the con-

sequences of such an insult—send her back to them.

Among the Christian Albanians, the religious ceremony is now performed in the nuptial chamber itself, where an altar is specially dressed for the occasion. The nearest relatives of the bridegroom only are present, and he, like the bride, simulates great unwillingness to enter the apartment. The mass performed, the priest asks the bride three times if she willingly accepts the man kneeling at her side for her husband. Convention, however, forbids her to reply, and at the third interrogation the women in attendance force her to bow her head in token of assent. The bridegroom, on the contrary, pronounces his consent in a loud voice.

The ceremony terminated, the bridegroom leaves the room and the female guests re-enter, extolling in song the graces and virtues with which, according to them, every bride is endowed. The feast is then served, the men sitting down by themselves in one room, and the women in another, and the two parties amuse themselves separately for the rest of the evening. An hour before midnight, the women conduct the bride to the nuptial chamber, and, having taken off her bridal finery, cover her face with a veil, and leave her. When the bridegroom enters, he simulates astonishment at finding a maiden there. Lifting the veil from her head, he declares himself to be enraptured with her beauty, and asks her a hundred questions.

The bride feigns sleep and pretends not to hear him. He offers her sweets which have been left there purposely, but still she heeds him not. This comedy may—if the bridegroom be timid and the bride reserved—be prolonged until the third evening after the marriage, in which case the courage and virtue of the bride are extolled by the women in song. On the third evening, however, custom requires the bride to respond to her husband's advances. On the three days following the wedding the bride, dressed as before, stands like a statue in the reception-room to receive the women visitors who flock to the house in crowds.

The ceremonies attending the nuptials of the mountain people are almost precisely similar to those customary in the towns, with the exception that the bride is not veiled when conducted to her husband's home. A romantic reserve, however, surrounds the interviews between the young couple, who, especially if the husband be one of a numerous family and have no private apartments, can only meet in secret until they have children of their own. The mountaineers cherish this custom, which, they contend, by surrounding with a halo of romance and mystery the relations of the young couple, tends to keep their love for each other fresh and warm. The wedding processions of Moslem and Christian Albanians are only to be distinguished by the more picturesque effect of

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those of the former. Many of the company, dressed in rich apparel glittering with gold embroidery, accompany the bride on horseback, indulging as they go—whenever they arrive at a spot sufficiently spacious—in the manly old Osmanli game of throwing the *djerid*, or spear. Pistols are fired incessantly, and the strains of wild music echoing from the surrounding hills add to the animation of the scene.

The wedding ceremonies observed in Southern Albania, in so far as they differ from those of the Northern Albanians, resemble very closely the Greek country customs described in another chapter.¹

The funeral observances of the Albanians also resemble in some degree those of the Greeks. Family ties are equally strong in both races, and the death of a relative is always a source of poignant grief to the survivors, the demonstrations of sorrow being loudest and most heartrending when a man or woman dies in the prime of life. The women watching round the moribund give utterance to frightfully piercing cries and shrieks, upon hearing which the friends hasten to the house of mourning in order to take part in the death chorus. When the last breath is drawn, all the near female relatives of the deceased who are not past middle age—wife, sisters, sisters-in-law, and

¹ See pp. 106-119.

daughters—testify their grief by beating their breasts, scratching their faces until the blood flows, and tearing out or cutting off their hair. In their utter abandonment of sorrow they also beat their heads against the walls of the room, calling wildly upon the deceased by his or her name, often exhausting themselves to such a degree as to lose for the time the use of their voices. With the weaker among them these frenzies of sorrow generally terminate in a fainting fit, while others have frequently to be restrained by their friends from doing themselves grievous bodily harm in their excitement.

The men of the family receive visits of condolence from those of their own sex, who are received in the courtyard of the house of mourning. The formula in which sympathy is usually expressed is—‘May you continue to enjoy good health!’ the speaker at the same time putting his right hand on the shoulder of the mourner, who responds—‘May our friends also be well!’ and the visitor enters the house to express in the same way his sympathy to the women of the family. The corpse is washed and laid out according to the usages of the faith, Christian or Moslem, professed during lifetime, and is dressed in its best clothes, which are, however, taken off before burial. And now begins the formal wailing round the body, in which the women of the family are assisted by their neighbours.

The majority of the dirges used are, like those of the Greeks, conventional, every woman having her memory well stored with a repertory, from which she selects those suited to the occasion. They are sung antiphonically, a verse or couplet being first chanted as a solo, and then repeated by the rest in chorus. The nearest relatives first lead the chant, and continue without interruption until either their voices or their memories are exhausted. It is then the turn of the other women, who, when they consider that one has had the lead long enough, stop her with a sign, and another lifts up her voice. Among the dirges sung for a youth killed in battle the following, which is in the Tosk dialect, is one of the oldest and best known. The ideas expressed in it may also be found in Greek and Roumanian folk-song :—

Kyabesé's bridge hard by,
 Slain by treach'rous foes I lie !
 Comrades, greet my mother well,
 Bid her my two oxen sell.
 Asks she what doth me betide—
 Say, I have wedded here a bride.
 Asks she who holds me with her charms—
 Tell her, three bullets in my breast,
 Six in my legs and in my arms.
 Asks she who came as bidden guests,
 And at my wedding feast were seen—
 The crows and ravens, say, were there ;
They have the friends and neighbours been,
 'Twas *they* enjoyed the wedding fare !

Sometimes animals and inanimate objects with which the deceased has been associated in his lifetime are poetically represented as missing him and mourning his loss, as in this lament for a Tosk chieftain who has met with a violent death :—

Derven Agha, foully slain
With thy followers on the plain !—
Hear thy sword cry from the wall,
' Where's my lord ? ' in sorrow's thrall—
' Where's my lord, that he no more
Draws and wields me as of yore ? '
Hear thy charger from his stall,
' Where's my lord ? ' complain and call—
' Where's my lord, to fill my rack,
Girth the saddle on my back ?
Where's my lord, that he bestride me,
Once more through the mountains ride me ? '

As I have already had occasion to mention, the women of South Albania especially manifest an excessive degree of grief for the death of children, and often refuse, when left childless, to survive them. Sometimes, too, as among the Greek women, a mourner finds no adequate outlet for her grief in the conventional dirges, and, inspired by sorrow, bursts into an improvised lament for the lost son, brother, or husband, extolling his virtues and bewailing his fate.

It is said that when an Albanian of the mountains is led to execution by the authorities for any crime but that of theft—which is by these people alone considered disgraceful—he walks to his doom

with head erect and dignified bearing, improvising as he goes his own dirge, in which he relates the circumstances that have led to his premature departure from this world. His mother and sisters follow him to the place of execution, their hearts devoured with grief, but wearing smiles on their lips, in order that their relative may, on his side, show no sign of weakness. Intently they listen to his death-song, the words of which they treasure in their memories, and hand down to their posterity.¹

An Albanian funeral, in conformity with the usual Eastern custom, takes place within four-and-twenty hours after death. Before the corpse leaves the house, it is measured with a string, which is then thrown up into the open rafters of the roof. If the deceased has not a silver ring on his finger, a coin is placed, as among the Greeks, on the mouth ; and one of the relatives seats himself three times on that part of the floor on which he breathed his last. On the way to the burial-ground, the men surround the bier, the women

¹ This recalls Burns' spirited song, 'MacPherson's Lament,' the words of which might fittingly be used by an Albanian bravo :

I've lived a life of sturt and strife ;
 I die by treacherie !
 It burns my heart, I must depart,
 And not avengéd be !
 Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
 Sae dauntingly gaed he ;
 He played a spring, and danced it round,
 Beneath the gallows tree !

follow behind, and resume their wailings as the procession leaves the house. Arrived at the mosque, or church, the men enter, but the women remain without, weeping, shrieking, and lamenting continually. Before leaving the church, the men salute the dead with a last kiss, the women doing the same at the grave. The body is laid in the bare earth, and a stone slab is placed over it, on which the soil is cast. At this stage of the proceedings, the cries of the women become quite heartrending ; they crowd round the grave, and can with difficulty be prevented from throwing themselves into it, and even the men are frequently heard to sob aloud. As soon as it is filled up, however, a sudden silence prevails, for now the *kokiete*, the Greek *kólyva*, is handed round, and it is accounted sinful to mourn whilst eating it. As each person takes a handful of this funeral dish, he says, ' May he (or she) be forgiven ! '

On this and the two following days, the house of mourning is filled with a succession of condoling friends, who bring with them all the food necessary for the family, as no cooking is done in it during this period. Others send presents of wine or spirits, the bearer of which delivers them with the greeting : ' May I have come for your good ! ' On the third day the wailing at the grave is repeated, and in the house of mourning continued for forty days, being performed by the women of the house and those who visit them for this

purpose, either early on the morning of each day, or on Sundays and feast days only.

The grief of relatives is, however, as a rule, less demonstrative for the death of a woman ; and for a man well stricken in years no wailing takes place. In the latter case, the deceased has usually set aside one or more sheep to be sacrificed on his death as an atonement for his sins, the flesh of which serves for the funeral feast. At this feast, the guests drink 'To the forgiveness' of the departed, and sing funeral songs in his honour.

When, as often happens, a man dies at a distance from his home, on the arrival of the tidings of his death, the funeral ceremonies are, with the exception of the actual interment, performed as above described. The women lament, friends hasten to comfort them, and the procession goes to church, the place of the bier being occupied by the youth who carries the dish of *kólyva*, on which is placed a cake for the priest.

Only slight changes are generally made in their dress by the Albanian women on the death of a relative. The chief mourners cut their hair short, turn their coats inside out, so that the fur lining alone is seen, and lay aside all ornaments. The nieces of the deceased allow their hair to hang loose for some months, or cut off a lock, and wear on their heads a black kerchief. A similar head-dress is assumed by the widow, who, if she has arrived at middle age, wears it for the rest of her

life. If, however, she is still young, and intends to return to her father's house with the expectation of finding another husband, she wears at the same time her bridal apparel, and refrains from manifesting such an exaggerated degree of grief. Sometimes, too, as illustrated in the history of Shainitza and also very frequently in folk-tale, the grief of the women finds expression in giving to their dwellings the most dismal and funereal appearance, by painting black either the whole of the outside of the house, or the shutters only, and covering up or removing from their usual places the mirrors and other ornaments.

CHAPTER IV

ALBANIAN BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

THOUGH speaking the same language, observing the same customs, and cherishing the same traditions and aspirations, the Albanians, as may have been seen from the foregoing chapter, are, in matters of religious belief, divided by three Creeds, the Moslem, Orthodox Greek, and Roman Catholic. The Moslems constitute about one-half of the population, and of the remaining half the majority follow the rites of the Eastern Church.

After the loss of their independence the Albanians began by degrees to abandon the faith of their forefathers for that of their conquerors. Islam, however, made but slow progress among them until towards the close of the sixteenth century, when the Porte promulgated a law assuring the possession of their property to those Albanian families who would allow one of their sons to be brought up as a Moslem. As the Tosk proverb says—‘Where the sword is, there is the Faith,’ and the advantages which a nation of mercenary soldiers could not fail to find in belonging to the religion of the dominant race soon made

conversion so general that the populations of whole villages, towns, and even districts, would simultaneously apostatize to Islam. Wholesale perversions such as these were not infrequent even in the nineteenth century ; and the prevailing tendency on the part of the highlanders to become Moslems, and of the Orthodox Christian agriculturists to emigrate to Greece and elsewhere, makes it probable that in course of time the country may become entirely Moslem.

Like the Kurds, however, the Moslem Albanians have among the Turks the reputation of being but indifferent followers of the Prophet, and the same opinion is entertained by their Greek neighbours of the Albanians who call themselves members of the Orthodox Church. Christian men marry Moslem women, and *vice versâ* ; the sons being brought up in the faith of Mohammed, and the daughters in that of Christ ; Moslems revere the Virgin Mary and the Christian saints, and make pilgrimages to their shrines ; while Christians reciprocally resort to the tombs of Moslem saints for the cure of ailments or in fulfilment of vows. And Christians and Moslems alike cherish innumerable ancient rites and superstitious usages, which both creeds have proved powerless to eradicate. The Miridites and some tribes of Ghegs on the coast adopted the Roman Catholic creed about the end of the eighteenth century, and follow the Latin rite with some Oriental differences—as,



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for instance, the administration of the Eucharist in both kinds to the laity.

The celebration of the Festival of Our Lady of Skodra (or Scutari), which is held in the Latin church on the anniversary of the departure of her image from that town, and in which Christians and Moslems participate, is a striking example of the half-hearted belief of the Schyipetars. The story goes that in the olden time, when all the country was Christian, there stood in the city of Scutari a beautiful image of the Virgin Mary, to whose shrine thousands flocked every year from all parts of the country to offer their gifts, perform their devotions, and be healed of their infirmities. Such, indeed, was the healing power of this Madonna that no sick person was ever known to kiss in faith her white feet and not depart completely cured.

For some cause or other, however, it fell out that there arose dissension between the priest and the people, and one day the latter came to the church in great crowds declaring that unless the priest yielded to them they would then and there abjure the faith of Christ and embrace in its stead that of Mohammed. The priest, whether right or wrong, still remaining firm, his congregation tore the rosaries and crosses from their necks, trampled them under their feet, and, going to the nearest mosque, were received by the Mollah into the fold of the True Believers. Grieved and displeased at

this wholesale desertion of those who had received nothing but benefits at her hands, Our Lady of Skodra disappeared during the night from that ungrateful land. What new shrine the beautiful image had hallowed with its presence was, for a time, unknown. Some months later, however, tidings were brought that, on the night of her departure from Scutari, an image of the Madonna had miraculously entered the church of a remote village in Italy, and had there taken up its abode. A voice was also, it is said, heard crying over Scutari that not till the last *Turki* (Moslem) had left the land of Schyiperi would Our Lady of Scutari forgive her children, and return to her ancient shrine. The scene on the anniversary of this day in the great square building which, with its bare walls and absence of ornament, bears little resemblance to a Romish church, is most striking and strange. The mass performed on the occasion is listened to by a congregation whose waist-belts—bristling as they do with pistols and yataghans of every shape and pattern—are perfect arsenals. Among them may be seen wild-looking, fierce-moustached Highlanders, white-kilted Mussulmans, chieftains blazing with gold embroidery, and milder citizens in more homely garb, all assembled in honour of the Madonna, before whose shrine their ancestors had worshipped.

Yet, notwithstanding their participation in the religious rites of their neighbours, the Albanians

are not less tenacious of their own honour than of that of the creed they profess, any insult offered to a Christian church being promptly retaliated upon a Moslem mosque, and *vice versâ*. Of this the following incident, which occurred in the latter half of last century, offers a striking illustration.

A certain Tahir Mala of Bugna, belonging to the Moslem tribe of the Gascii, having married his son to a maiden of the Christian Schialla, set out to bring the bride home, accompanied according to national custom by a numerous train, and preceded by the tribal banners. On the return journey, they stopped, as usual, every now and then to fire volleys into the air. Their way, however, lying past a Christian cemetery, the cross over its gateway offered a mark for their pistols too tempting to be resisted, and was soon riddled with balls. The tribe of the Schialla, having heard of this insult to their religion, prepared to take vengeance for it; but, the offenders being out of reach, they made the family of Bobi, to which the bride belonged, responsible. The Bobi engaged to obtain satisfaction within a week, or pay the penalty, and on the morrow the young men of the family set off for Bugna, where they killed two nephews of Tahir Mala. Not content, however, with this retribution, they entered the mosque, where they killed a pig, rubbed the doors with its blood, and placed the

head on the ledge of the pulpit. The Moslems, at this profanation of their mosque, hastened to complain to Mustapha Pasha, of Skodra, who prepared to send a military expedition against the Bobi. The latter, with the rest of the Schialla tribe, then placed themselves under the protection of the Miridite Prince, Prenk Doda, who threatened the Pasha that, if troops were sent against the Schialla, he would not only support them, but call all the Christian highlanders to arms. The Pasha, alarmed at the prospect of a religious war for which he would be held responsible, then agreed to let the insulted cross atone for the polluted mosque, and cry quits with the Christians.

The uncanny beings with which the Albanian women terrify themselves and their children appear to be for the most part, like those of the Bulgarians, personifications of the powers of Nature. Of these imaginary beings, some belong exclusively to Albania, while others may also be found among the superstitions of Slavs, Greeks, and Turks. The *Vilas* would seem to resemble most nearly our own fairies, though, like the Nereids of the Greeks, they are of the full stature of mortals. Like our fairies, too, it is unlucky to mention them by name, and they are generally referred to as 'Those Without,' 'the Happy Ones,' 'the Nymphs of May,' or 'the Nymphs of the Mountain.' As a rule they are harmless, if not offended, and amuse themselves with elfish tricks, such as taking

children up to the roof of the house to play with and bringing them back safely. They, however, take it very ill when mortals disturb them in their haunts and interrupt their banquets ; and so capricious are they that they will place themselves invisibly in spots where they are likely to be disturbed, in order to have a little vent for their pent-up malice. The unlucky wight who sets an irreverent foot within their elfin rings is believed to receive a stroke from an invisible hand from which he will ere long sicken and die. In consequence of this belief, it is said of one for whose death no adequate cause can be assigned, ' He has received a blow.'

The favourite haunts of the *Vilas* are retired and shady spots, but they also have a partiality for the gutters on house-roofs, which it is a rather risky matter to clean out, especially after sunset. The *Vilas* are said, in North Albania, to be of two kinds—well-disposed and beautiful beings, who ride about on fleet horses ; and ill-disposed and hideous creatures, whose heads are covered with writhing serpents instead of hair. To meet the former is considered a good augury, but the appearance of the latter presages certain misfortune. Another and similar class of beings, known by the Turkish name of *Djin*, attach themselves to dwellings, in which they perform the rôle generally attributed to good fairies, setting the house in order, grooming the

horses in the stable, and plaiting their manes and tails. Sometimes, too, like the Nereids and Lamias of the Greeks and the Samodivas of the Bulgarians, they form matrimonial alliances with mortals.

The *Ore* is a being who constantly wanders about in order to hear and carry into effect the blessings and curses pronounced by men on each other ; and in North Albania the usual formula with which a beggar concludes his thanks and blessings for alms received is, ' May the Ore hear and bring it to pass.'

Among the malevolent 'Outsiders' are three kinds of man-devouring female monsters—the Koutchedra, the 'Dogsuckler,' and the Liouvia. The first figures frequently in folk-tale, and in addition to her cannibalistic propensities is credited with the power of drying up the springs and fountains at which she drinks ; the Dogsuckler is endowed with four eyes, two in the front of her head and two in the back ; while the Liouvia is extremely partial to the flesh of little children.

The *Dif*, or *Dev*, is also a being possessed of extraordinary physical strength. ' He is a regular Dif ' is said of a remarkably strong man, as we say, ' He is another Samson.' According to the people of Elbassan, the Dif is an enormous giant who lives underground and never comes to the surface, and whose business is to keep the cauldrons boiling which supply the hot and medicinal

springs in the neighbourhood of that town. These springs, in common with those found in other parts of the country, are much resorted to for curative purposes. Their waters are, however, drunk indiscriminately for all kinds of ailments, without regard to their various medicinal properties. The cures effected not being attributed to the water itself so much as to the influence of the magical beings who have their abodes in the springs and wells, people go from one spring to another in the hope of propitiating their various tutelary deities.

In Albania, as in all the remoter parts of Turkey, there is no Pelasgian ruin to which is not attached some legend of a hidden treasure, either 'guarded by word and by spell,' or placed in the safe keeping of a gigantic Negro, Djin, or other Supernal. Those who have concealed treasure in such places have also, it is believed, fixed the time at which it may be brought to light, and have left to their heirs a document containing a description of the hiding-place, the formula of the magic spell pronounced over it at the moment of burial, together with the year, the day and the hour, on which alone it can be recovered. At the appointed time the heir goes to the spot indicated, pronounces the mysterious words, and the treasure is immediately brought to the surface by its guardian genius. Sometimes, however, the treasure is buried in such a way that, at the

appointed time, it rises spontaneously to the surface, and anyone finding it may appropriate it. The lucky person must, however, be careful to keep his own counsel in the matter, or he will be punished by finding the gold turned to charcoal, and will not long survive the incident. When the treasure is in the keeping of a Negro, he occasionally spreads it out in the sunshine in order that it may not be damaged by the damp, and, at the appointed time, he never fails to bring it permanently to the surface.

The majority of the ailments which afflict mankind being believed by the Albanians to be caused by magical influences, I will now proceed to give some illustrations of their folk-remedies. These are usually accompanied by some form of incantation, the secret of which is possessed only by some wise-woman who has inherited it from her mother, and who will, in her turn, impart it to her daughter. If, for instance, a person believed himself to have received a blow from one of the invisible *Vilas*, or some other 'Outsider,' he has recourse to the witch-wife, who, after dressing the patient in white garments, conducts him to an uninhabited house in a retired situation. On arriving, she first ceremoniously greets the mysterious powers whom she believes to be invisibly present, and then placing her patient in a suppliant posture, she gives him rose-water to drink, and both observe a solemn silence for some ten minutes, during which

she makes certain mysterious signs and motions. After again saluting the *Vilas*, the witch-wife leads her patient home by another road than that by which the couple have arrived.

Sometimes a magic circle is drawn by the witch-wife round a person so afflicted, in which he remains seated three days, at the end of which time he is washed with 'unsspoken-over!' water—i.e. water drawn from a well or fountain in silence and carried home without the bearer having spoken, or been spoken to, on the way—such water being held to possess highly salutary virtues. Into the water some 'sweet' or 'heavy' leaves are thrown, the number and also the kind being determined by fixed rules, according to the nature of the malady. Among the 'sweet' leaves are those of the pomegranate, apple, and rose trees, and also, strange to say, of nettles; among the 'heavy,' those of the laurel, cypress, ivy, and other evergreens. Three days after such an ablution the patient is expected either to recover or to die. Should he be able to indicate the spot on which he received the blow, the earth is there sprinkled with rose-water in order to appease the offended beings, who are said to be extremely fond of this scent; or he there throws something, the nature of which is known only to himself, in the belief that the malady from which he suffers will be transferred to the being who may chance to tread upon it.

The effects of the 'evil eye' are also removed by sprinkling the patient with 'unsspoken-over' water, three nettle-stalks being dipped into it for that purpose, and giving him to eat three mulberry buds, the mulberry tree being one of the sovereign antidotes for that much dreaded influence.

Rheumatism in the hands or feet is cured by bathing the affected member three times in warm water, rubbing it with salt, and finally passing over it the blade of a knife with the words, 'As this salt melts, so may the evil melt!' The house is then swept with a new broom, the sweeper saying as the dust is swept out, 'So may all evil be swept away!'

When an Albanian wife has no children, or is the mother of girls only, she, like her Greek sister, attributes her misfortune to some enemy of her family having tied together a number of nettles with this object, and has recourse to counter-spells in order to remove the charm. If an Albanian, having lost his first wife, marries the second in what the relatives of the deceased may consider indecent haste, they revenge themselves upon him by pouring water upon the grave of his dead wife, in the belief that this will have the effect of causing his second spouse to be childless.

Among the Christian Tosks, if two or more children of a family have died in infancy, the next born baby is passed three times through a kind of iron tripod. If yet another child dies, the next

baby is placed where four roads meet, a silver cross, for which nine women who bare the name of Maro have given the metal, is laid on its body, and the first passer-by is asked to be godfather or godmother to it.

In some places—the neighbourhood of Dibra for instance—black sheep are said to be sacrificed by witch-wives for the benefit of sick persons. Similar sacrifices appear to be now substituted for those of human beings, who, in the popular traditions of the Albanians, as in those of other nations, are said to have been formerly buried under the foundations of important buildings.

Very numerous are the ceremonies observed with the object of ensuring good, or averting bad, luck. In Northern Albania, when a youth, or man, is about to leave his home for a distant town a curious ceremony is performed, which is believed to ensure him a safe and successful journey. In front of the house-door the women place a jar filled with ‘unspoken-over’ water, decorated with foliage and hung with ear-rings of gold and silver. The traveller touches the jar with his foot, takes in his hand the ear-rings and some of the foliage, and sets out, accompanied for a mile or two by his relatives, to whom, when they finally take leave of him, he returns the ear-rings. It is considered a bad omen for the journey if the traveller should for any reason turn or look back. If he have left anything behind, he sends another

to fetch it ; and should a friend or stranger call to him from behind, he will not turn back to meet him, but remain standing where he is until the other comes up, a practice which foreigners, not understanding the reason for it, have put down to discourtesy. If on the road the traveller meets a fox, or a flock of sheep, he considers it a good augury ; a flock of goats, however, or a hare crossing the road, is held to signify ill-luck.

Omens and auguries, too, both good and evil, are drawn from all the trifling occurrences of everyday life, as well as from the observation of the phenomena of Nature, besides being sought for in the bones and entrails of slaughtered sheep and in the flight of birds. Among the omens read in the actions of the domestic animals are the following : When introducing a newly purchased cow into the farmyard, some object, made of iron or silver, is placed across the gateway through which the animal is led. Should the cow step over the object with the right hoof, it is considered a good augury, but if with the left, the omen is unfavourable. If a hen shake her feathers in the house, or if one of her feathers hang askew without falling, it foretells the arrival of a friend, or the receipt of news from an absent relative. Should the hen crow like a cock without turning her head to the east, it signifies a death or other serious misfortune ; while the crowing of a cock at an unusual hour of the night is held to be either a sign of a change in

the weather or that important news may be expected in the morning. To an expectant mother, however, the incident announces that her child will be a boy ; while, on the other hand, the croak of a raven or the hoot of an owl in the vicinity of the house announces merely that the ' little stranger ' will be a girl. Should the dog howl while looking away from the dwelling, it is a sign of death ; and if the cat mew repeatedly, that a member of the family will shortly fall ill. If, however, pussy should lick herself frequently, it is merely a sign of rain.

Cats, I may here remark, are treated with great kindness by the Albanians, who, it is said, are not in the habit of laying to their charge the smashing of crockery, or the disappearance of provisions. According to a myth current among the Christian highlanders, the cat was created by Jesus, who produced one from the sleeve of His mantle when dining in a house infested with mice, while a Moslem legend relates that a cat having saved Mohammed from snake-bite the Prophet's blessing was conferred on the feline race generally. To kill a cat is, consequently, considered a most reprehensible action. When such a family pet dies, the children of the house call in their friends to assist in the obsequies, and, after the cat has been carried in solemn procession to the grave, the little party sit down to a funeral feast, for which the mother willingly furnishes the necessary viands.

The cries of the wild beasts and birds, and also the circumstances under which they are heard, or the animals themselves met with, have also their signification. If wolves howl in packs, it betokens, in some districts, a death ; in others, severe frost. To meet a snake before sunrise, or about sunset, augurs the death of a relative. If the turtle-dove, which in Middle Albania builds in the towns and villages, sits on a roof and coos, it announces to the inmates the return of a relative from a foreign land. When a cuckoo, however, sits there and sings, or an owl hoots, it betokens a death in the house. Sparrows flying in large flocks are held to be a sign of severe cold, while various auguries are also drawn from the arrival in spring of the birds of passage, and the circumstances under which they are first seen. To see, for instance, the first swallow or turtle-dove before breaking one's fast in the morning portends sickness. Accordingly, about the time when these birds are expected, and more particularly on May-Day, the precaution is taken of placing by the bedside a small piece of bread, which is eaten immediately on awakening in order to avoid any such risk. In Northern Albania, on the contrary, it is considered lucky to see the first swallow while fasting.

In addition to the everyday observances with respect to auspicious and inauspicious actions and events, so many are attached to certain seasons

and days of the year as to form quite a Calendar of Superstitions. Some tribes—the Ritzza, for example—celebrate their New Year's Day on the first of September, and every incident that occurs during its twelve hours is believed to presage the events of the corresponding months of the coming year, while the events of the first day of each month foretell the character, lucky or unlucky, of the other days generally. It is considered most unlucky to work in the fields during the first week of October, and no corn is sown this month, as in that case the crop would be sure to fail.

The period between the 15th of November and the 6th of January is, like the Greek *Fishoti* and the Bulgarian *Kulada*, supposed to be the carnival time of the *Vilas* and other supernal beings, who are, at that season, not only more active, but more powerful than at other seasons, and especially during the night. After sunset, consequently, people refrain from going abroad, and from drinking water, for fear of mischief, and give no credence to their dreams. They are also careful not to leave any article of wearing apparel out of doors after nightfall; and if, by some oversight, a garment should be so left, it is washed before being used, in order to get rid of any spell cast upon it by 'Those Without.'

Christmas, which under its name of *Kolend-ravet* is apparently connected with those by which it is known among the Bulgarians and

Wallachians, is observed with ceremonies that recall those of more Northern nations, as well as with some similar to those of their last-mentioned neighbours. On the 24th and 25th of December the housewife bakes, besides other sweet cakes, some in the shape of rings, which are called *Kolendhra*. The one first made is termed 'the cake of the oxen,' and is hung up on the wall 'for luck,' and left there until the farmer goes out with his team to the fields. On this occasion the cake is taken down and broken to pieces on the head of one of the yoked oxen, and then divided between the pair.

Fire-ceremonies also play a great part in the Christmas observances of the Albanian highlanders. As may have already been remarked in connection with birth-ceremonies, a protective and salutary character appears to attach to the fire on the hearth, and not only on such occasions, but likewise on the eve of every important festival, even in summer-time, the Albanian peasants light fires and keep them burning until sunset on the following day ; and from the crackling, or exploding noises emitted by the wood in burning, they learn when the enemies of their house are conspiring against them, and whether the flocks will thrive, or the contrary. On ordinary occasions they consider it inauspicious when the thick end of a log burns before the thin, and are careful not to place one log across another. On Christmas

Eve, however, all such precautions are considered unnecessary, and the fire is piled up as high as the safety of the house will permit, this being supposed to neutralize all evil effects of the non-observance of the foregoing precautions during the coming year. The largest log that can be found is brought home at sunset, when all the family, reunited for the festival, rise to greet it with the words: 'Welcome, our log! God has destined thee for the fire! Bring thou good luck to us and to our flocks!' and before the family sit down to supper a small quantity of food from every dish on the table is placed upon the burning log. Some branches of a cherry-tree are also thrown on the fire, and when partially burnt are taken off again and kept. Towards midnight the boys, in companies of from ten to fifteen, go singing from house to house, and receive, in reward for their carols, a ring-cake from each housewife.

On the Eve of St. Basil (December 31) the fire is also kept burning all night, and the half-burnt cherry branches are again thrown on and withdrawn, to be wholly consumed on the Eve of the Epiphany, when the ashes are collected and strewn in the vineyard of the homestead. The fire of St. Basil's Eve is often watched by an expectant mother, who thus hopes to ensure an easy confinement. In the morning the Albanian peasant folk wash themselves and their children with 'unspoken-over' water, and draw omens from the

character, gay or sad, of the person who enters the house as 'first foot.' A cock is also sacrificed, as it is considered auspicious to spill blood in the house on St. Basil's Day.

On the Eve of the Epiphany the fire is also kept alight all night, and in the morning the character of the coming seasons is predicted from the set of the wind. If a south wind blows, it indicates a full harvest and sickness ; if the wind is from the east, a scanty harvest and a healthy year are expected, and if from the north, a late spring. The Christian peasants, on the Feast of the Epiphany, sprinkle their vineyards with holy water in the hope of ensuring a plentiful crop of grapes, and place at the four corners of each plot four vine-stems tied together with straw bands, over a piece of a cake called a *kophtopite*, made specially for the purpose, wine being one of its ingredients. A round loaf is rolled from the gate to the middle of the vineyard, and then distributed to the ravens, crows, and other birds which damage the grapes, with this invitation, 'Assemble, O Crows and Ravens, to your feast, and let us also eat and drink, and do us no more harm in the days to come !'

On the first day of February, St. Tryphon's Day, it is considered lucky to work in the fields, but not in the vineyards, and on the second day, when the 'Feast of the Purification' is observed, all kinds of small pulse and cereals are cooked together in a pot, this mess, called *karkasina*, forming the staple

food of the day. On the eve of the first of March a kind of divination is performed by throwing into the fire a particular leaf and pronouncing at the same time the name of a member of the family. If the leaf makes an explosive noise while burning, it is held to be a good omen for the person indicated, but if it burns quietly, the reverse. In Southern Albania the women on this day twist together a number of coloured threads and tie them round the children's wrists and necks in order to preserve them from sunburn or sunstroke, and draw a similar thread along the threshold of the house. They also roll up tightly little balls of rag, at which they stitch assiduously with a needle and thread ; and when asked what they are doing, reply, ' We are sewing up the plague, snake-bite, and all other kinds of sickness.' On this day no vegetables are eaten, the sweet cakes and dishes which are alone indulged in being believed to ensure a good summer. The whole of this month is also a close time for the ravens, as to kill one would bring bad luck to the vintage.

The people of North Albania celebrate their New Year on the first of March (old style). On this day the cattle are decked with garlands of flowers, and the Ghegs not only tie threads of many colours on the wrists and necks of their children, but themselves also wear one of red silk on the little finger of the right hand and the great toe of the right foot. When the first swallow has

been seen, they take off these threads, and hang them on the rose-bushes, in order that the swallows may carry them to their nests. This graceful little custom is not, however, apparently, indigenous, and may indeed have been partly borrowed either from the Bulgarians or, through the neighbouring Wallachians, from the Roumanians, among whom a similar usage exists. While I was at Salonica, one of these parti-coloured bracelets, with the tiny gold coin attached, was presented by the Roumanian Consul-General on this date to each lady of his acquaintance ; and I, for one, until the month was out, religiously wore my charm against the power of the March sun, which in the East generally is said to ' blacken ' the complexion. It was not, however, finally thrown to the swallows, but carried off as a curiosity by an English naval officer.

Almost every Albanian tribe has a more or less mythical tradition of its origin, which is generally traced to some single ancestor. Of these I have already mentioned two, the legends of the Miridite clans of the Clementi and the Castrati. Another tradition, however, traces the descent of the entire tribe of the Miridites from one man, who, like the favourite hero of fairy tales generally, was the youngest of three sons. His father, according to the story, lived on Mount Pastrik, near Diakova, and at his death the three brothers divided their poor inheritance, the eldest taking the saddle (*Shulla*), the second the sieve (*Shosh*), the third

receiving only the salutation of ' Good-day ' (*Mir dia*). As is, however, always the case in this class of story, the prosperity of the portionless one greatly excelled that of his brothers. For while they became the founders of the clans called Shialla and Shoshi, in remembrance of the saddle and sieve they had respectively inherited, he who had been dismissed with an ironical salutation bequeathed it as a name to a far more numerous and powerful tribe—the Miridites.

Though the Albanians cannot be called a musical people, singing is the favourite pastime of both men and women. Their airs have little variety, being for the most part monotonous recitatives, and the singer's merit depends upon his success in rivalling the violin, mandolin, or flute, by which his song is accompanied, in prolonging the last note. The songs are generally long ballads, which recount the victories of the tribe, the doughty deeds of ancestors of the family, or the exploits of some national hero. For in the songs of the Schyipetars the later history of the country is preserved; and in those of the Ghegs more particularly may be found the record of how they obstinately resisted, yard by yard, the Turkish advance into their mountains, and were only subdued at last by the overwhelming numbers and equal pertinacity of the foe. The record, too, of every insurrection—and they have been many—has thus from 1572 downwards been orally transmitted from generation to generation, keeping

alive in the memory of the Albanians the heroism of their ancestors, and inciting them in their turn to similar deeds of heroism. The songs vary greatly in literary merit. Poetical talent seems now to have died out in the country, though formerly Albania had her national poets, the last of them (so far as I can ascertain), Hussein Mollah, having flourished in the eighteenth century. The old ballads are consequently far superior to those of more recent date, which consist chiefly of detached couplets, and are very episodic, though they describe with sufficient accuracy the events they profess to record. It is said that in the more remote highlands some very ancient historical ballads are preserved, but unfortunately none of these have yet been collected.

One of the most striking songs of the Schyipe-tars commemorates the revolution of 1572 under Ibrahim Pasha of Scutari. The result of this insurrection was the recognition by the Porte of its leader as Pasha of Scutari, he being the first Albanian since the Turkish conquest who had been allowed to assume that title. The song is, unfortunately, too long to give in full, but the following opening and concluding lines may give some idea of its spirit :—

No ! no ! our country only must we ' Mother ' call,
For on her breast she us has nourished all.
She is the Wife we to our bosoms press,
Who wakes within our hearts love's tenderness.

Where is the man, love of such Mother, Wife,
Who holds within his heart, counts not his life
As naught, as naught whatever he
May sacrifice, to keep his loved one free ?

Come ! Oh, ye loyal sons, brave children, come !
And you, ye cherished husbands, hasten home !
Come to the arms of those who, with your fall,
Would have lost loved ones, country, home, and all !
Come back and rest from war's dread strife and din,
And teach your sons a hero's name to win !

The national songs, as well as the folk-tales, of the land of their forefathers are also sacredly cherished by those exiled Albanians who have for centuries past been settled in Southern Italy and Sicily. There, too, the exploits of the valiant Scanderbeg are still celebrated, and at their feasts they sing how the hero of Croia

Of hares and capons ate the flesh,
Of partridges the heads ate ;

and how

His cups and forks were all of gold,
And of fine silk his napkins.

The women, too, in their Easter dances, relate how, as he went forth to battle, Death met him on the road, and revealed to him the secrets of the Book of Destiny ; how he called to him his young son and bade him tether his horse to a cypress on the seashore, plant his banner beside it, and on it

hang his sword, stained with the blood of the
Turk :—

Within its blade Death yet shall sleep,
And, 'neath that sombre tree,
The arms of their erst dreaded foe,
Shall they now silent be ?

Nay ! When the wind shall furious blow,
And waves my flag around,
When whinnies my good charger there,
My sword makes clanking sound,

The Turk will hear, and, tremblingly,
Will flee, with bated breath,
With visage blanched, and hear behind
Ride, swiftly following, *Death !*

CHAPTER V

THE BALKAN GREEKS—THEIR DOMESTIC USAGES

THE degree of seclusion observed by the women of the Christian races inhabiting the Balkan provinces has always varied according to external circumstances, and would appear to be due rather to considerations for their safety necessitated by their peculiar position among peoples of alien race and creed than to any desire on the part of their male relatives for their subjection. The social position of the women of a country being chiefly determined by the law of marriage of the established religion, the status of the Greek women, as of those belonging to all the other Christian nationalities of these Balkan regions, is primarily determined by that Christian law of marriage which abolished the old rights and privileges enjoyed by the women of the Roman Empire, and introduced the subjection of the wife to the husband in an indissoluble marriage. By the Greek Church, however, this general Christian law was modified so long ago as the eleventh century, when the Patriarch Alexius permitted the clergy to solemnize the second marriage of a divorced woman if the conduct of her first husband had occasioned the divorce.

And at the present day little difficulty is experienced in dissolving an incompatible union without misconduct on either side, and whether the suit is brought by husband or wife, the case being tried by a Council of Elders presided over by the Archbishop of the diocese, who hears all the evidence *in camera*, thus avoiding the scandal attaching to divorce cases in the West.

It must, however, be said that the privilege of divorce among the Greeks is rarely made use of without good and serious reasons, both social opinion and pecuniary considerations weighing strongly against it, and in all my long acquaintance with persons of this nation, not more than half a dozen cases have come to my personal knowledge. For though Greek matches are, to a great extent, *mariages de convenance*, marital dissensions are extremely rare, especially among the upper and middle classes, Greek men, besides being good sons and brothers, being exemplary husbands, and the women in their turn the most devoted of wives. There exist, too, as will appear elsewhere, considerable remains of patriarchal customs, even among the wealthy and educated classes. One of these is that the sons, on marrying, often bring their wives to the paternal home. The mother, on the death of her husband, is not banished to 'the dower house,' but retains the place of honour in the household, and receives every mark of attention and respect, not only from her sons,

but from their wives, who consider it no indignity to kiss her hand, or that of their father-in-law, when receiving their morning greeting or evening benediction. And in these irreverent days it is very refreshing, on visiting a Greek family, to see the widowed mother at the head of the table, and remark the deference paid to her by her son and her daughter-in-law.

Though widely dispersed throughout the various Balkan provinces, the Greek peasants seldom occupy the same villages with those of other races. Some of the Greek villages, with the lands adjoining, are owned and tilled by peasant proprietors. These are called 'Head-villages,' or 'Free-villages,' and many of them are tolerably wealthy and prosperous. The majority of the Greek agricultural population in these regions are, however, tenants on the *métayer* system, who receive the seed grain from the landlord, for whom they cultivate the land, and share with him the produce of the fields. These *yeradjis*, as they are termed, labour under great disadvantages, and are, as a class, poor and much oppressed. Their dwellings present a pitiable aspect, being usually miserable one-storied huts, constructed of wattle, plastered with mud inside and out, and consisting at most of two rooms, with holes for windows. A fence encloses the small farmyard, with its granary and cattle-shed. The houses of the 'Head' or 'Free' villages are, however, often built of stone, some-

times of two stories, enclosed in a courtyard, and, when the locality is not subject to the attacks of brigands and other similar dangers, they may have shuttered glass windows. Tables, chairs, and even bedsteads, are not unknown luxuries among the more prosperous peasant farmers ; a few pictures hang on their whitewashed walls, and there is usually a rude *eikon*, or picture of the Virgin and Child, before which hangs a small oil-lamp. The kitchen is furnished with well-burnished copper pans, and the *kilér*, or storeroom, contains an ample supply of native wine, oil, and winter provisions.

Greek peasant women are not employed to any great extent in fieldwork, though they usually take an active part in much of the labour connected with the farm, and their household and dairy duties are many and varied. In Roumelia and Macedonia the girls and young women hire themselves out for the June harvest, and assist in the reaping and threshing. Agricultural machinery has found little favour in the East, being quite unsuited for the method of farming followed by the natives, and the implements of husbandry used are of the most rude and primitive description, entailing a great deal of hand-labour and involving a considerable amount of waste. Threshing is performed by the girls with the aid of an instrument which must surely have been used in Pelasgian times. It is composed of two pieces of wood joined together in something like

the form of a horseshoe, and studded on the under-side with a number of flints. A couple of ponies are attached to the curved end of this implement, on which a girl stands, and are driven over the grain spread out on the threshing-floor. Unscientific as this method may be, the scene presented is very picturesque, when the presiding Koré is a lithe and lissome lass. The corn is winnowed by being thrown up in the air with wooden shovels, the chaff being carried away by the breeze. In some parts of Macedonia the process of threshing is even more primitive. A team of horses or oxen is driven round and round the threshing-floor, the women and children beating out the remainder of the grain with sticks.

To the Greek peasant girl also is committed the care of her father's flock, which she must lead every day to the pasture, and fold at night. The *voskopóula*, or shepherdess, is one of the most prominent characters in rural folk-song, and many a charming idyll has been composed in her honour by amorous swains. But she has little time for sylvan dallying, for the sheep and goats must be milked, and the milk must be converted into cheese and *yiaourti*, a delicious and wholesome sour curd, which is in great demand in the towns. When the sheep have been shorn, the wool is bleached and spun, and then knitted and woven into garments for the family, or into cloth for sale. The cotton and flax grown on the farm must also

be gathered in their seasons, and prepared for use. The cotton pods are put through a small hand-machine called the *mangano*, which turns two rollers different ways, and separates the fibre from the seed. The instrument next used is the *toxé-vein*, a large bow made from a curved piece of wood five or more feet long, the two ends of which are connected by a stout string. The cotton is placed loosely on the string, which is made to vibrate by being struck with a stick, producing a not unmusical sound. This process detaches the particles of cotton, and it is now ready to use as wadding for the large quilts, which, with a sheet tacked to the underside, form all the winter bed-covering used by the lower orders of natives of every race. The mattresses are also usually stuffed with cotton, and the palliasses with the husks of indian corn.

If, however, the cotton is to be converted into yarn for weaving, it is twisted as it leaves the *toxévein* into a loose rope, wound round the distaff, and spun. When the yarn has been dyed or bleached, according to the use that is to be made of it, the women or girls set to work at the hand-looms which form an important part of the furniture of every cottage, and weave it into strong durable calico, or brightly striped stuff for dresses and household purposes. A certain proportion of the cotton and wool is reserved for knitting, and it is most pleasing to watch the graceful

motions and picturesque poses of the women and girls as, standing on their balconies or terraced roofs, they send the spindle whirling down into courtyard or street while twisting the thread for this purpose. The knitting is done with five curved needles, having ends like crochet-hooks, and the stocking is always worked inside out, a method which produces a close, even stitch, and the work is extremely durable. The old women usually undertake this household duty, and with needles in hand and the 'feed' of the yarn regulated by a pin fastened to their bodices, they sit in their doorways for hours together, gossiping with neighbours, or telling fairy tales and crooning old songs to the little ones.

In many districts the silkworm industry keeps the women fully occupied during the spring months. The long switch-like branches of the pollarded mulberry-trees are gathered every morning, and their fresh leaves given to the caterpillars ; and all the tedious and laborious details connected with the silkworm nurseries are carefully performed in order to keep the worms in good health, and thus secure a successful crop.

Laborious as the lives of these thrifty country-folk may appear, Sunday and Saints' Days are holidays duly observed and thoroughly enjoyed. The working-dress of plain homespun is now laid aside, and the picturesque gala costume donned. That of the women consists of a skirt, woven in

stripes of silk and woollen, reaching to the ankles, with a tight-fitting bodice of the same, a cloth jacket braided or embroidered round the borders in gold thread, and in some districts a bright-coloured apron ornamented with needlework. The Greek maiden's carefully combed hair is plaited into innumerable little tails, and surmounted with a small cap of red felt, decorated with silver and gold coins similar to those she wears as a necklace. Thus adorned, she accompanies her parents to the early Mass in the little whitewashed church, summoned by the sound of the primitive *symandro*—a board struck with a mallet—in lieu of bell. Returning home, the simple morning meal is soon despatched, the cattle and poultry are fed, and the rest of the day is given up to well-earned repose and amusement.

In the afternoon the peasants resort *en masse* to the village green. The middle-aged and elderly men take their places in the background under the rustic vine-embowered verandah of the coffee-house ; the matrons with their little ones gather under the trees to gossip, while their elder sons and daughters perform the *syrtòs*, the 'long-drawn' classic dance. Each youth produces his handkerchief, which he holds by one corner, presenting the other to his partner. She, in her turn, extends her own to the dancer next to her. The line thus formed, 'Romaika's dull round,' as Lord Byron termed it, is danced to the rhythm of a song

chanted in dialogue form, with or without the accompaniment of pipe and viol, until the lengthening shadows of evening send the villagers home to their sunset meal. The kerchiefs of the youths are frequently love-tokens from their sweet-hearts, as sung by the love-sick swain in the following dancing song :—

Whoever did green tree behold—
Thine eyes are black, thy hair is gold—
That with silver leaves was set ?—
Jet black eyes, and brows of jet—
And on whose bosom there was gold—
O eyes that so much weeping hold !—
At its foot a fountain flowing—
Who can right from wrong be knowing ?

There I bent, the fount above,
To quench the burning flame of love ;
There I drank that I might fill me,
That my heart I thus might cool me.

But my kerchief I let slip—
O what burning has my lip !—
Gold embroidered for my pleasure,
'Twas a gift to me, the treasure !

That one it was they broidered me,
While sweetly they did sing for me !—
Little maids so young and gay,
Cherries of the Month of May !

The music with which these rural dances are sometimes accompanied is supplied by a three-stringed viol, a primitive variety of mandolin, with the reed-pipe and drum ; but when girls and women dance by themselves it is usually to the

accompaniment of their voices alone. The dancing songs then used are often of a humorous character dealing with the romantic side of rural life, yet at the same time full of the rich imagery of flowers, fruits, gold, silver and jewels characteristic of Greek love-songs generally.

The majority of these dancing songs are sung antiphonically by two sets of voices. Sometimes, as in the above, one set begins the song and the other adds to each line in turn a kind of parenthesis extending it. In the following song, and in many others, the end of the line is repeated, or altered, by the second set of voices :—

A youngster me an apple sent, he sent a braid of scarlet—

He sent a braid of scarlet.

The apple I did eat anon, and kept the braid of scarlet—

And kept the braid of scarlet.

I wove it in my tresses fair, and in my hair so golden—

And in my hair so golden ;

And to the sea-beach I went down, and to the shore of ocean—

And to the shore of ocean.

And there the women dancing were, and drew me in among them—

And drew me in among them.

The youngster's mother there I found, and there too was his sister—

There was his eldest sister ;

And as I leapt and danced amain, and as I skipped and strutted—

And as I skipped and strutted—

My cap fell off, and ev'ry one could see my braid of scarlet—

Could see my braid of scarlet.

'Hallo! the braid you're wearing there was to my son belonging—

My dearest son belonging !'

‘ And if the braid that now I wear was to your son belonging—
Your dearest son belonging—

He sent an apple which I ate, my hair the braid I wound
through ;

And I will soon be crowned¹ too ! ’

The Greek peasant women are, on the whole, honest and industrious, affectionate mothers, and devoted and virtuous wives ; and a striking proof of their morality is afforded by the long absences from home which their husbands are often compelled to make in the pursuit of their avocations—absences often extending over many years. During this time the care and education of the children and the local interests of the family are left entirely in the hands of the wife, who generally proves herself equal to the occasion, and worthy of the trust reposed in her. There are many touching folk-songs describing the wife’s grief and loneliness during her husband’s absence, and the return of the husband so changed after long years of absence that his faithful wife fails to recognize him, and requires of him proofs before she can admit him within the house as her husband :—

‘ If thou art he, my husband dear, himself and not another,—
Tell me the fashion of our house, and then I may believe thee.’

‘ An apple-tree grows at the gate, another in the courtyard ;
And there’s a golden candlestick that stands within thy
chamber.’

‘ That’s known in all the neighbourhood, so all the world
may know it !—

Tell me the marks my body bears, and then I may believe
thee ? ’

¹ i.e. Crowned in marriage.

'Thou hast a mole upon thy chest, another in thine armpit ;
There lies between thy soft white breasts a grain that's white
and pearl-like.'

'Ah, now I know thou art my man !—O welcome home, my
husband !'

As girls of the peasant class can usually find plenty of occupation at home, they seldom go out to service, except when there happen to be more daughters in a family than the father can afford to portion. There is also a general prejudice against allowing girls to leave the paternal roof until they are married, and a reproach is implied in the expression, 'So-and-so has gone to strangers.' There are, however, districts which form an exception to this rule, and some of the Greek islands are famous for their women cooks, who can always command good wages in the towns of the mainland. From the islands, too, come the good old nurses, bringing with them their antiquated costumes and charming lullabies and folk-lore. The girls who enter domestic service save their wages carefully for a marriage dowry, and, in the country towns, wear the coins strung together round their necks, a fashion formerly common to all classes, when Venetian sequins were in great demand for this purpose. As the folk-song says :

I'll a lady to thee bring,
Who has sequins by the string !

The amount of a girl's dowry is thus easily ascertained by *pallikars* on the look-out for a 'weel

tochered ' bride. In the maritime cities, however, the national costume has, unfortunately, been quite discarded by the women, and the collar of coins has also been laid aside. Many girls, and especially orphans, are taken when still quite young into wealthy families, and adopted as *psychopaidià*, or 'soul children.' Until the age of thirteen or fourteen they attend the public schools, are clothed by the family, and assist in the lighter household duties, receiving presents at the New Year and other festivals; and, after a dozen years or so of faithful service, a trousseau and small dowry are provided, and a husband found for them, generally a small shop-keeper or artisan. As there are in these Balkan provinces no savings banks, or other convenient methods of safely investing small sums, servants often allow their earnings to accumulate in their employers' hands until they marry or return to their homes. A laundry-maid in the house of one of my friends had upwards of £100 to receive when she left after a long period of service.

No social intercourse exists between the Greeks and their Turkish neighbours, although they usually live amicably enough together when fanatical feeling is not excited by war or other circumstances. The prejudice against mixed marriages is naturally very great, and no alliance of the kind can take place without perversion on one side or the other. Such perversion must, however, be on

the side of the Christians, for apostasy is a crime in Islam. The laws, too, regulating the sexual relations of Christians and Moslems are exceedingly severe, and the probable fate of a *Giaour* hardly enough to fall in love with a fair Moslem is thus illustrated in Greek folk-song :—

DEMOS AND THE TURKISH MAIDEN

They caught him, and they bound his arms, and to be
hanged they led him ;
A thousand went in front of him, five hundred walked
behind him ;
And Demos walked amid them there, and mournful was
his aspect.

Though one seldom hears of a Christian man who has embraced Islam for the sake of a Moslem love, it has been by no means of rare occurrence that a Christian peasant girl, prompted by vanity or ambition, has renounced the faith of her fathers in order that she might marry a Turk who had flattered her by his attentions. She may not, however, do this hurriedly or without due consideration, and her renunciation of Christianity must be made before competent witnesses, both Christian and Moslem.

The opposition displayed by a Christian community to the perversion of one of its members, from such a motive, generally produces great ill-feeling between them and their Moslem neighbours, and sometimes leads to fatal results. Such was the case in 1876, when the apostasy of a village girl of doubtful reputation resulted in an out-



SALONICA FROM THE EAST



break of fanaticism at Salonica, during which the French and German Consuls were cruelly massacred. And another such catastrophe, arising from a similar love affair, was narrowly escaped at Larissa in 1880.

Townswomen of the middle classes present a curious medley of homeliness and pretension. They are good wives and devoted mothers, and often, though their education is but slight, are not without great good sense and intelligence. The great majority, however, while retaining the customs they dare not to throw aside without scandalizing the *mahalla*, seem possessed with a frantic desire to be considered in other respects 'Franks,' or foreigners. Having seldom any outside interests or occupations, their lives are passed for the most part in a dull routine of household duties, varied only by gossip at their doors in warm weather, occasional attendance at church, and a walk on the public promenade on some great holiday. Some of the girls and young women earn their living by doing needlework and embroidery, or by lace-making; and in districts where the culture of silk is carried on on a large scale, Greek girls and women find employment in the silk factories, this being especially the case at Broussa, where they work side by side with Armenian and Turkish women. But girls even of the working-class cannot with propriety go out unless attended either by a relative or some elderly woman, so strict is national prejudice on this point.

Dress is a passion with girls of this class. On the rare occasions on which they are seen in public, their toilettes are wonderful—though, as I have said, they go hatless, and often gloveless—the great object of their ambition being to rival their wealthier neighbours, whose dresses, in the large towns, are sure to be copied by the carpenters', shoemakers', and boatmen's daughters.

Notwithstanding, however, these feminine weaknesses of petty vanity and love of display, the Greek women, besides being, as before-mentioned, faithful and affectionate wives, are also the most tender—if not always the most judicious—mothers to be found in any country. And well is their devotion usually repaid by the dutiful and affectionate regard shown them by their sons and daughters. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a people in whom family affection is more strongly developed, or with whom the ties of kindred are held more sacred. The young men who leave their native towns or villages to seek fortune in a distant town or foreign land, generally return home to marry the wives chosen for them by their parents, and, when they retire from commercial or professional pursuits, endeavour to spend the rest of their days in the midst of their kindred. When a youth is leaving for the first time the bosom of his family, it is customary for his relatives and friends to accompany him some distance on the road. Before taking her final

leave of her son, the mother laments his departure in song, to which the youth responds, bewailing the hard fate which drives him forth from his home. These Songs of Exile are sometimes extempore effusions called forth by the circumstances which induce or compel the youth to leave his home. Others, more conventional, describe the condition of the stranger in a foreign land, without mother, wife, or sister to minister to his wants, or cheer him in sickness or sorrow. In one of these, which is entitled 'The Last Farewell,' is depicted the evil augury of excessive sorrow at a son's departure : and in the following a husband thus addresses his young wife :—

Now's the hour of my departure, yearns and fails my heart
o'erflowing ;
Shall I e'er return—who knoweth?—To a stranger land
I'm going.
Hill and valley must I traverse, rocky wild and desert
dreary,
Where the timid game his haunt has, where the eagle builds
his eyrie.
Now has come the hour despairful, hour which tears me
from my home ;
Now has come the sentence fateful, which abroad doth
bid me roam !
Lassie like the gladsome dawning, gentle lassie, kind and true,
Burns my heart with bitter anguish, now I'm bidding
thee ' Adieu ' !

The benefits of education have never been undervalued by the Greeks even in the darkest period of their enslavement ; and the excellent Greek schools at Salonica are by no means insti-

tutions of modern foundation, for it is to the public-spirited munificence of a lady of the sixteenth century that these schools chiefly owe their origin. This was the Kyria Kastrissio, a native of Ioannina, the widow of a Greek of Salonica, who, at her death, bequeathed the whole of her large fortune to the schools of those two cities. The memory of this munificent lady, together with that of a later benefactor, Demetrius Roggoti, is annually honoured with a *Mnemosynon*, or Commemoration ceremony, by the Greek community of Salonica, when the chief families of the city, together with all the officials, native and foreign, are invited to the school examination held on the occasion. It was always an interesting ceremony, and I never failed to avail myself of the kind invitation of the 'Ephors,' as the Managers are termed. The ceremony began with the bringing in of the *Kolyva*, or Funeral Dish of boiled wheat, decorated on the top with designs in coloured sugar, almonds and raisins, and other dried fruits, of crosses, coffins, leaves and flowers, monograms and inscriptions. A hymn was then sung by the pupils, followed by a song, 'Rejoice in Life,' which, though its words were translated from German, was in spirit truly classic; this being followed by the 'Ode to the Fatherland':—

Long as the universe shall last,
Long as the sphere shall circling roll,
Thy glory, O my Fatherland,
And name thy sons shall still extol !

And after an eloquent discourse on the great Macedonian philosopher, Aristotle, delivered by the Director of the Schools, questions were put on a variety of subjects, and answered with great intelligence and readiness by the Macedonian maidens, who also read passages from Homer and Æschylos with the soft, musical pronunciation which only modern Hellenes know how to give to the tongue of the ancient Greeks.

The women belonging to the remarkable little aristocratic community known by the name of 'Phanariots' are worthy of special mention. These survivors of the noble Greek families of Byzantium take their distinctive name from the locality called the *Fanar*, or 'Beacon,' allotted to them by Sultan Mohammed II at the conquest of Constantinople. At the present day they are represented among others by the well-known names of Ypsilante, Karatheodory, Mavrogordatos, Mavroyenni, and Karadjàs. The daughters of these ancient houses have long been as distinguished for the elegance of their appearance and manners as for their culture and accomplishments, and to many the language of Homer, Pindar, and the tragic poets is as familiar as the vernacular. Some of these able women, organized in societies, also devote much of their time to the management of schools, and to the supervision of hospitals and asylums.

CHAPTER VI

GREEK FAMILY CEREMONIES

A GOODLY number of pagan beliefs and practices may still be found among the Greek populace generally, urban as well as rural, these remnants of an ancient cult lingering especially round such fateful domestic events as birth, marriage and death. In Southern Macedonia the arrival of a 'little stranger' is awaited in solemn silence by the *mammé*—as the Greek midwife is termed—and a group of elderly relatives, whose presence and prayers keep away 'all things harmful.' As soon as the glad news of the baby's arrival has been circulated all the members of the family and household flock into the sick chamber to offer their congratulations, which are addressed to the unconscious infant as well as to the happy mother. Both parent and child must now be carefully watched over, and are never left alone, as the Nereids of the fountains and springs are sure to be hovering near a house in which a birth has recently taken place, on the look-out for an opportunity of exchanging one of their own fractious offspring for a mortal babe; and during the next forty days the house-door

is kept closely shut between sunset and sunrise, lest perchance one of these greatly dreaded Beings should find her way into the dwelling.

On the third day the mother leaves her bed round which she walks in a stream of water, poured by the *mammé* from a jar in her path. The meaning of this custom is not very clear. Taken in connection, however, with the other superstitious rites, and also with the similar custom observed on wedding-days, it would appear rather to be either a libation to the earth, or a tribute to the elemental deities. The Fates, who are expected to arrive during the coming night to decide the infant's future, must also be propitiated. If the new-born babe is a boy, coins of gold and silver, a sword, and a cake of bread are placed beneath its pillow to remind the 'Dealers out of Destinies' that fortune, valour, and abundance are the best gifts; if it is a girl, a distaff or spindle is substituted for the sword.

A Greek christening generally takes place before the infant is a week old, and is made the occasion of much display. The groomsman and first bridesmaid who have officiated at the wedding of the parents now become sponsors for the children under the names of *Nonó* and *Noná*, and *synteknoi*¹ to their father and mother. For, among members of the Greek Church, the terms 'god-father' and 'godmother' are by no means the

¹ i.e. *God-sib*, or 'Gossip.'

empty titles into which they have degenerated with us; the responsibilities undertaken by baptismal sponsors are religiously fulfilled, and they are treated by their godchildren with an affectionate respect little less than that shown to their parents according to the flesh. The children of both families are considered brothers and sisters, and a conventional relationship is created which forms as complete a bar to intermarriage as the closest consanguinity. A man could not, for instance, wed a widow if he had acted as 'best man' at her wedding or stood sponsor to her children at the baptismal font, and a Greek would as soon think of marrying his own sister as the daughter of his *Nonó*. In some localities it has indeed become difficult for young people, and more especially those of the better classes, to find spouses, so closely are their families already connected by intermarriages and conventional relationships.

The expenses of the christening are borne by the *Nonó*, who pays the priest's fees, buys the baptismal robe, and furnishes the customary refreshments of liqueurs, bonbons, etc. As the Greek Church prides itself—and not without reason—on keeping up primitive forms more strictly than even the Roman Catholic, baptism is performed, not by any conventional sprinkling, but by trine immersion. The baby, carried by the *mammé* and escorted by a long irregular procession of sponsors, relatives and friends, is met at the

church door by the officiating priest, when the *Nonó*, taking it from the nurse, holds his godchild in his arms while the preliminary prayers, to which he makes the usual responses, are read. He then delivers the infant to the *papas* who, turning to the East, makes with its little body the sign of the Cross. The party then enter the church and while the preparations for the sacred rite are being completed the candidate is laid, according to its sex, before an *eikon* of Christ or the Virgin. When all is ready the naked child is handed to the priest who dips it three times in the font to the water of which has been added a few drops of 'holy oil.' Three tiny locks of hair are then cut from the baby's head and thrown into the font 'in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.' This dedication of hair was, no doubt, originally an offering to the elementary spirits, the water from the font being emptied into a pit or well under the floor of the church.¹

Then follows the 'Confirmation' of the infant, which consists in anointing the head and certain parts of the body with consecrated oil. After being dressed it is carried three times round the font, prayers being meanwhile intoned, and then taken before the Holy Gates, where it receives the

¹ This supposition, though questioned when first advanced some years ago, has been more than confirmed by Mr. Paton in his paper on 'The Holy Names of the Eleusinian Mysteries,' published in the *Proceedings* of the International Folklore Congress of 1891.

Eucharist in both kinds, administered, according to the practice of the Eastern Church, in a spoon. The christening party then return to the baby's home to congratulate the mother and partake of the customary refreshments, each guest receiving on taking leave a tiny cross attached to a white rosette as a souvenir of the happy event.

Marriage being looked forward to as a matter of course, the preparation of a girl's trousseau is often, especially among the working and peasant classes, begun by the careful mother while her daughter is still a child. The daughter of a well-to-do peasant will receive as her portion a sum ranging from £30 to £100, a good stock of house-linen and home-made carpets and rugs, several articles of furniture, and two or three outfits of clothing, including a gala costume for Sundays and holidays. This varies according to locality. In Lower Macedonia a full skirt and short-waisted bodice are worn over a long gown of native linen crêpe, this costume in some districts not being considered complete without a brightly coloured apron, thickly embroidered on the lower edge, and a belt or girdle. For out-of-door wear a jacket is added, fitting tightly to the figure, and reaching below the knees. This is usually of fine cloth, ornamented round the borders and sleeves with gold thread or coloured silks, and is invariably lined with fur. Among the middle classes of the

towns from £300 to £500 is the average dowry, and the trousseau will be for the most part of European fashion and materials. As a portionless girl, however comely, has little chance of finding a husband, a Greek father will, consequently, make it his first duty to save a *dot* for his daughters; and brothers, in a father's place, consider it incumbent on them to see their sisters satisfactorily settled in life before taking wives themselves. Social opinion is very strong on this point among the Greeks, with whom fraternal affection is apparently allowed to cover a multitude of sins.

In the matter of marriage, national etiquette decrees that the principals should ostensibly take no part in the preliminary arrangements, which are carried out by the parents of the contracting parties with the help of a professional female go-between, known as the *proxenetra*. This agent is commissioned by the parents of a marriageable girl to find a suitable husband for her; or, it may be, to open negotiations with the parents of a young man whom they have themselves selected among the eligible *partis* of their acquaintance. When all the preliminary negotiations have been arranged to the satisfaction of the two contracting families, and the go-between arrives to inform the maiden's parents that the other party are satisfied with the amount of her dowry, a stick of cinnamon is produced and broken between the girl's mother and the *proxenetra*, who consume in

silence this symbolic spice. The amount of dowry the maiden will bring is then formally agreed upon in the presence of witnesses, and the first of the three betrothals is concluded. As soon as it is made public, the accepted suitor accompanied by his relatives pays a ceremonial visit to the family of his future wife. The party are received with great formality, the maiden standing in a posture of affected humility and modesty, with hands crossed on her breast and downcast eyes, to receive the felicitations of the visitors, a custom which has given rise to the Greek saying, 'as affected as a bride.' When all the customary compliments have been interchanged, the inevitable *glycò*—preserves served with glasses of cold water—is handed round, followed after an interval by coffee and cigarettes, and the party then take their leave. The betrothed maiden accompanies them to the head of the staircase, kisses the hands of her future spouse and his relatives and receives from them in return a gift of gold coins and a bunch of the symbolic sweet basil.

Some of the most interesting old customs in connection with the marriage ceremony may still be found lingering in Southern Macedonia, and especially at, and in the neighbourhood of, its ancient capital, Edessa—now called by the Slav name of Vodhena, 'the Waters,' from its magnificent cascades. Here a week or more is devoted

to the preparatory nuptial observances and festivities. On the Sunday, a copy of the marriage contract is formally delivered at the house of the bridegroom, who sends in return a present to the bride, consisting of sugar-plums, henna, rouge, soap, etc., and a large jar of wine for her parents. On Monday, the maiden friends of the bride arrive to assist her in sifting and otherwise preparing the grain, which they subsequently carry to the mill. On the morning of Wednesday, they again assemble to fetch home the flour, and in the evening a number of female relatives and friends come in to help in the making of the wedding-cakes. The long wooden kneading trough is brought in and filled with the yellow flour. A boy, armed with a sword, seats himself at one extremity, and at the other is placed a little girl, who, as she pretends to mix the dough with her tiny hands, hides in it the wedding-ring and some coins. Bright and joyful must the lives of these little ones have been, and unclouded by any family bereavement. The boy with his weapon evidently signifies that the husband is the natural guardian of the home, and the kneading girl that domestic duties are woman's sphere. The bread-making is then performed in earnest by experienced hands amid songs and laughter—for these occasions are red-letter days in the monotonous lives of the Greek women of the interior—and then left till the morrow to 'rise.'

On Thursday the kneaders again assemble and divide the dough into portions, each girl and woman searching in her portion for the ring and coins, the bridegroom being in honour bound to redeem the ring with a present from the one who has been lucky enough to find it. The dough is then returned to the kneading-trough, and made into a variety of cakes, among them a large one, called the *propkasto*. On the afternoon of Thursday, the bridegroom arrives with his bachelor friends; the *propkasto* is placed over a bowl of water, and round it the assembled youths and maidens dance three times, singing the 'Song of the Wedding Cake.' The cake is then broken into small pieces, which are showered over the heads of the young couple, interspersed with figs and other fruits, for which the children delightedly scramble.

On Friday, the bride and bridegroom exchange presents. The bearers of the bridegroom's gifts set out, preceded by music, for the abode of the bride, who awaits their arrival with eager expectation. The envoys, after having been warmly welcomed, thanked, and refreshed with wine and special nuptial viands, are in turn entrusted with the bride's presents to her betrothed, these being carefully wrapped in embroidered *boktchas*, or bundle wraps, tied up with strands of tinsel thread. If the bridegroom's home is in the same neighbourhood as that of the bride, parties of the near relatives of the couple go from house to house

bearing invitations to all the guests who are to take part in the festivities of that evening and the following day, a ceremony also extended to the happy pair, who invite one another. The *koumbaros* and *koumbara*, groomsman and head bridesmaid, are the last called upon, and, accompanied by the band, proceed to the house of rejoicing. Music, dancing and feasting occupy the time until the evening, when the maidens carry off the bride to perform part of her toilette for the morrow. After washing, perfuming, and perhaps dyeing her long hair, they plait it in a multitude of long braids, amid jokes and merry laughter, one after another bursting into hymeneal song of a highly complimentary character, such as the following :—

Dress thee, and busk thee, winsome one,
 Dress thee, and busk thee, lassie!
 That to the bridegroom thou appe ar
 As flowery field and garden !
 The nightingales all envy thee,
 They fly in flocks before thee,
 Singing and saying in their song,
 ‘ Joy we all in thy beauty ! ’
 So brightly shine the golden locks
 Rippling upon thy shoulders ;
 Angels have surely combed them out,
 With combs of silver smoothed them.

Or this :—

Thou didst but sit upon the chair,
 When, lo ! its wood, all lifeless,
 Thy beauty quickened into leaf,
 And flushed all o’er with blossom.

The very deer made holiday
 The day thy mother bore thee !
 For dowry the Apostles twelve
 Bestowed on thee thy beauty.
 Of all the stars of heaven so bright,
 One only thee resembles,
 The star that shines at early dawn
 When sweet the morn is breaking.
 From out of heaven the Angels came
 The Saviour's orders bearing ;
 The brightest radiance of the sun
 They brought thee on descending.
 Thou hast the hair of Absalom,
 The comeliness of Joseph ;
 He'll lucky be and prosperous,
 The youth who thee shall marry.
 Hail to the bridegroom's mother dear,
 Hail to the bride's new mother !
 Who such a noble son has borne,
 Fit mate for such a maiden !
 What *proxenetra* made the match,
 Who cinnamon has eaten,¹
 When such a partridge was betrothed,
 And pledged to such an eagle ?

The bridegroom has, in the meantime, been conducted by his friends to another room, where the local barber proceeds to shave him carefully, a considerable time being devoted to the operation, as is usual in the East, this ceremony being also enlivened with music and complimentary songs.

As there are 'lucky' and 'unlucky' days for every incident of domestic life, Sunday is considered the most propitious for the termination

¹ Alluding to the little ceremony described on pp. 107-8.

of the wedding festivities. On the morning of this day, accordingly, friends and relatives assemble at the house of the bridegroom, embrace and congratulate him on the auspicious event, and escort him to the home of the bride. As they leave the house, his mother, in accordance with ancient custom, pours a libation of water before him at the gate, and lays across his path a girdle, over which he steps. If the parties are well-to-do, or the distance is long, he may ride to the ceremony ; but most frequently the procession takes its way on foot, calling on the way for the *koumbáros* and *koumbára*, and singing as they go :—

Set out, my tree, start gaily,
Set out, set out, my cypress,
Set forth to seek the poplar,
With long and slender branches.
Beside thee shalt thou plant it,
And tenderly bedew it ;
And when the breezes bend thee,
Thou'lt stoop, and kiss it sweetly !

Arrived at the home of the bride, the ceremony commences with the exchange of the documents containing the marriage contracts, which are presented by the priest to the respective parents of the bride and bridegroom. The amount of the dowry is then paid in cash to the bridegroom, some of whose friends convey it forthwith to his residence, and the second betrothal, a ceremony similar to that observed in classical times,

takes place, the father of the bride, or, failing him, her nearest male relative, offering to the corresponding relative of the bridegroom some sweet basil on a plate, thrice repeating the words: 'Accept the betrothal of my daughter to your son!' When the same ceremony has been performed by the bridegroom's nearest of kin, a male relative of the bride—who has not previously made his appearance—presents on her part to her future spouse a glass of wine, a *kouloúra*, or ring-shaped cake, and a spoon. After drinking the wine, he drops some coins into the glass for the bride, eats half the cake, and gives the remainder, with the spoon, into the keeping of the *koumbáros*. Another envoy from the bride then comes up to gird the bridegroom, and while doing this he essays to lift him from the ground, the happy man resisting to the best of his ability. And now the bride, garbed in all her wedding finery, her rouged and spangled cheeks partly hidden by a gauze veil, over which hang long streamers of tinsel thread, is led in to be shod by the best man with the embroidered slippers provided by her bridegroom. Conducted to the courtyard gate, she steps over the threshold into the street across a libation of water poured before her by her mother, wedding marches and hymeneal songs enlivening the procession as it takes its way in leisurely fashion to the church. The bridal pair, carrying tapers decorated with flowers and knots of white ribbon, take their places before the Holy

Table, the bride standing to the left of the bridegroom, and the third *arrhavon* is now performed by the priest. When the first part of the ritual has been read, the *papas* makes the sign of the Cross three times with the rings over the heads of the couple, and then places them on their respective hands, saying, 'Give thy troth, servant of God (adding the man's name), to the servant of God (adding the woman's name), in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' The priest then takes the wedding wreaths—constructions of white artificial flowers and ribbons—from the hand of the *koumbáros*—and places them on the heads of the bride and bridegroom with the words, 'Crown thyself, servant of God,' etc., as above. The groomsman, standing behind the couple, changes the wreaths three times, while the priest repeats these words. The bride, bridegroom, and *koumbáros* then drink from a glass of wine which has been blessed by the *papas*; and the pair, holding each other's hands, are led three times round the Holy Table, the best man following, with his hands on the 'crowns.' The remainder of the liturgy chanted—with nasal intonation, and many repetitions of *Kyrie eleison*—the priest removes first the wreath of the bridegroom, and then that of the bride, pronouncing at the same time a blessing upon them in scriptural language.

The *koumbáros* having set the example by kissing

the bride and bridegroom, the assembled friends now crowd round to offer their felicitations. On the return of the procession to the bride's home, her mother places a loaf on the heads of the newly wedded pair, while comfits are showered over them by the rest of the company. The bridal feast follows, and is prolonged until it is time for the departure of the wedded couple. After drinking healths the glasses are thrown away over the shoulder, and if they do not break it is considered a bad omen. And then comes the farewell to the paternal home, which is expressed in many a touching folk-song, sung while the bride is weeping in her mother's arms :—

Fare thee well, father dear, farewell !
Good-bye, my sweet kind mother,
Fare ye well, loving brothers all !
And you, my friends and kinsfolk !
For to my mother-in-law's I go,
To my new home I'm going ;
And letters there I'm going to learn,
To write down all my treasures.
Farewell ! adieu ! my neighbours all,
And you my neighbours' daughters,
For to my mother-in-law's I go, etc.

As the bride leaves the house, a loaf is divided, one-half of which she takes with her to her new home. The guests now escort the pair to the village green, where the bride and bridegroom will open the dance. As they go, they sing :—

To-day the heavens are decked in white,
This is the day right gladsome ;

To-day we have in marriage joined
 An eagle and a partridge ;
 A little spotted partridge here
 Has come to us a stranger ;
 Her little claws are coloured red,
 And finely marked her feathers.
 She in her claws has water ta'en,
 And oil upon her feathers,
 That she may wash her ladyship,
 That she may preen her beauty.
 To-day it is a worthy day,
 With sequins in its pocket ;
 For we two birds have wedded now,
 And we a pair have made them.

Fierce shone the sun, and down swooped an eagle,
 Seized he a birdling, far off with her flew ;
 White-skinned and lovely was she, yea, and black-eyed,
 Tiny as partridge that crouches in dew.

The *syrtôs* danced, the procession re-forms, and the happy pair are conducted with songs and music to the paternal roof of the bridegroom. Some of the songs sung on this occasion are in dialogue form, and, like the foregoing, which comes from Ioannina, express the bride's regret at leaving the home of her youth :—

' O wand'ring nightingale, and exiled birdie,
 Where wert yestre'en, and where wilt be this even ? '
 ' Ah, yesternight I slept all safely with my parents,
 Now father-in-law's and husband's roof must shield me ;
 Yea, 'neath my husband's roof shall I abide at even ! '
 ' O wand'ring nightingale, O exiled swallow,
 Why art thou now so sad ? Why is thy face o'erclouded ?
 Behold thy bridegroom dear, how he upon thee gazes !
 See how for joy he leaps and with his eyes devours thee ! '

Red and white cherry on a branch, in newly planted orchard,
She hangs like tassel on the horse, like saddle rayed with
sunshine.

Happy will be he who may kiss the winter and the summer ;
The summer rosy red who'll kiss, who'll kiss the winter snow-
white !

When the party approach their destination,
the bridegroom's mother is thus addressed :—

Dame and mother-in-law, forth come,
Welcome now the partridge home !
Take the bird to your abode,
Lightly trips she o'er the road.

Receive her now,
Receive her now.

Both sun and moon command thee now !

O see her as she walks along,
She's like an angel 'mid the throng !
O rise, go forth and thou shalt see
Both sun and moon appear to thee !

Dame and mother-in-law, forth come,
Welcome now the partridge home !
Within the cage thou her must bring,
As nightingale to thee she'll sing !

On the following morning, friends assemble before the house to greet the young couple with songs and music. The *koumbáros* arrives to breakfast, bringing with him the half cake and the spoon confided to his care on the preceding day. The bride uses the spoon in commencing her meal, and eats the cake. The meal concluded, she proceeds, accompanied by the women and girls who have serenaded her, to the well from which her husband's family draw their supply of water, in order to

perform the ceremony, observed from time immemorial, of propitiating the Nereid of the spring or well with the gift of a coin dropped into it from her lips. She then draws a pailful of water and pours it into one of those classically shaped earthen jars still in common use in Eastern lands, which she carries home on her shoulder. On entering the house, the bride pours some of the water over the hands of her husband, and presents him with a towel on which to dry them, receiving in return a little present. Feasting and dancing occupy the rest of the day, after which the young wife settles down quietly in her new home, relieving her mother-in-law of many of the household duties.

On the following Friday, however, the bride, accompanied by her husband, returns to spend twenty-four hours under the paternal roof, and pays her mother another visit on the subsequent Wednesday, when she takes with her a bottle of the native spirit called *raki*, or mastic, bringing back with her an equal quantity from the family store. The nuptial observances are finally terminated three days later by a feast given by the bride's father to all the relatives of the couple.

The ceremonies observed by the Greeks in connection with death and burial are almost everywhere identical, and include many archaic customs and time-honoured traditions curiously associated with the rites of the Eastern Church.

After the first burst of natural grief is exhausted, the body is left to the ministrations of the 'washers of the dead.' The customary ablutions performed, the corpse is anointed with oil and wine, and sprinkled with earth. A clean mattress and bed-linen are spread on a long table, and the dead person, dressed in his holiday garments, is laid out on it, with his feet pointing towards the door and his hands crossed on his breast. The bier is decked with fresh flowers and green branches, and three large wax tapers, ranged at the foot, are kept burning the night through. The female relatives of the deceased, with dishevelled hair and disordered dress, now enter the death chamber to perform the duty of watchers. Seated round the room on the floor, they take it in turn to chant dirges for the departed, lamenting his loss, extolling his virtues, and, in some cases, describing the cause of his death. Greek women have in all times played a conspicuous part in funeral observances, and from the days of Antigone onward the fulfilment of the rites of sepulture has been observed by them as one of their most sacred duties. Homer describes how Andromache chanted a dirge to her dead husband and her son Astyanax, how the mother and sister-in-law took up the lament, the burden of which was repeated by a chorus of other women, and at the present day similar scenes may be witnessed in many a Greek home on the death of one of its inmates.

These *myriologia* are essentially pagan in sentiment ; they contain no assurance that the dead are in a state of bliss, and no hope of a happy meeting in Paradise, the lost ones being usually mourned as carried off by the vindictive and remorseless Charon from home and friends and all the joys and pursuits of the upper cosmos to his dreary realm of Hades. This 'lower world' is often in folk fancy pictured as a tent, green or red outside but black within, under which are held dismal banquets on the bodies of the dead. Charon goes out hunting on his black horse, and returns laden with human spoil of both sexes and all ages :

The young men he before him drives, and drags the old
behind him,
While ranged upon the saddle sit with him the young and
lovely.

Crudely expressed though they often are in the mixed and ill-pronounced dialects of the various localities to which they belong, these death-ballads are by no means devoid of finely imaginative and poetic ideas. Many are, no doubt, of considerable antiquity, and have been transmitted as heirlooms from mother to daughter through countless generations. Every woman knows by heart a considerable number, suited to all occasions ; and if these are found insufficient to express the overwrought feelings of a bereaved mother, daughter, wife, or sister, her grief will find vent in an im-

provised *myriologos*, less measured and rhythmical perhaps, than the conventional dirge, but equally marked by touching pathos and poetic imagery. The following are a few representative pieces in the metre and rhythm of the originals, which may give some idea of the style of lamentation used on these occasions.

DIRGE FOR A FATHER

Now sit around me, children mine, and let us see who's
absent :

The glory of the house has gone, the family's supporter,
Who to the house a banner was, and in the church a lantern
The banner's staff is broke in twain, the lantern is extin-
guished !

Why stand ye, orphaned children there, like wayfarers and
strangers ?

Why from your lips comes forth no wail like nightingale's sad
singing ?

Your eyes, why weep they not amain, and stream like flowing
rivers ?—

Your tears should spread as spreads a mere, should flow a
cooling fountain,

To bathe the weary traveller, and give the thirsty water !

DIRGE FOR A HOUSE-MISTRESS

What is this noise falls on our ears, and what is this loud
tumult ?—

Say, can it for a wedding be, or is it for a feast-day ?

The goodwife now is setting forth, to Hades she's departing ;
She hangs her keys upon the wall, and sets her house in order,
A yellow taper in her hand. The mourners chant sad dirges ;
And all the neighbours gather around, all those whom death
has stricken.

Whoso would now a message send, a letter let him give her.
 She who a son unarmed mourns, now let her send his weapons :
 Write, mothers, to your children dear, and ye, wives, to your
 husbands,
 Your bitter grief, your suffering, and all your weight of sorrow !

DIRGE FOR A DAUGHTER

‘ O tell me, tell me, daughter mine, how long shall I await
 thee ?—

Say, six months shall I wait for thee, or in a year expect thee ?
 Six months—it is a weary time ; a year—it is unending ! ’

‘ My mother, were it but six months, or were it but a twelve-
 month—

Then would the evil be but small, the time would fly full
 quickly.

Now will I tell thee, mother mine, when to expect my coming :
 When thou shalt see the ocean dry, and in its bed a garden ;
 When thou shalt see a dead tree sprout, and put forth leaves
 and branches ;

When thou shalt see the raven black, white-feathered like a
 pigeon ! ’

The interment usually takes place on the day after the death. The invited guests assemble at the house of mourning, bringing with them flowers to lay on the occupant of the coffin. In some localities the coin to pay his passage across the Styx—the *návlon* for Charon—is still, as in classical times, placed between the lips of the corpse. In others the coin is placed in the hand, or a fragment of tile on which the priest has drawn the mystic sign of the pentacle and the words ‘ Christ has conquered ’ is placed on the mouth of the dead, in order to prevent his returning to earth as a vampire. Wine and

funeral cakes are then handed round, and the company, as they partake of these funeral cakes, murmur reverentially, 'God rest him!' After the preliminary prayers have been offered, the corpse is taken up by the bearers, and the procession follows it to the church. In front walk the priests, carrying crosses and chanting the prayers for the dead; behind them are the chief mourners on either side of the open coffin, holding the ends of black streamers attached to it. In some inland towns the relatives continue to chant *myriologia* all the way to church, and afterwards to the burial ground. On arriving at the church the body is placed on a bier in the nave and the funeral Mass follows. The relatives are then invited to give the deceased the farewell kiss, and the procession sets out for the cemetery. Arrived here, the coffin is placed by the side of the grave, the concluding prayers are offered, and the lid is then nailed down. When the body has been lowered into the grave, the priest throws on the coffin a spadeful of earth in the form of a cross, and then hands the spade to the relatives, who do the same in turn, saying 'God rest his soul,' or simply, 'God rest him.' The grave is then filled up, and the funeral party return to the house of sorrow, where, after performing a ceremonial ablution, they sit down to a repast at which fish, eggs, and vegetables alone are served. The house must not be swept for three days after the dead

has been carried out of it, and the broom used on this occasion is immediately afterwards burnt.

The mourning worn by Greeks of both sexes is of a most austere character. Ornaments are rigidly set aside, and all articles of dress are of the plainest black materials, cotton or woollen, and made in the simplest fashion possible. In some districts the Greeks, on the death of a near relative, send all their wardrobes, not excepting underlinen and pocket-handkerchiefs, to the dyers, the result, as may be supposed, being funereal in the extreme. Women, too, frequently cut off their hair at the death of their husbands and bury it with them ; men, on the other hand, allow their beards to grow as a sign of sorrow. Mourning is also worn for a considerable period. Girls, after their fathers' death, usually retain it until they marry, and widows and elderly women as their permanent attire. For in many country districts custom does not allow a widow to enter a second time into wedlock, and one who ventured thus to violate public opinion would receive but scant respect from her neighbours for the rest of her days.

On the eve of the third, the ninth, the twentieth, and the fortieth days after burial, Masses are performed for the soul of the departed. These functions are termed *kólyva* ; and on the fortieth *kólyva* two sacks of flour are converted into bread, a loaf of which is sent to each family of friends by way of invitation to the commemoration service to

be held in the church. One of the large circular copper trays used for baking, which are surrounded by a rim about two inches high, is filled with boiled wheat, ornamented, as already described,¹ with elaborate patterns in almonds and raisins, sesame seeds, cinnamon, sugar-plums, sprigs of sweet basil, etc., and, accompanied by a bottle of wine for the priests, sent to the church to be blessed. The *kólyva* is said to be symbolical of the death and rebirth of Nature, like the myth of Demeter and her daughter; and also to typify, according to the Christian doctrine, that man is 'sown in corruption, and raised in incorruption.' When the company have assembled each person present takes a handful of the *kólyva*, with the words: 'God rest him,' and in silence consumes his portion of this funeral dish. On the following day the ceremony is repeated; and after eating a frugal meal together, the mourners and their friends proceed to the cemetery, accompanied by the priest, to erect a tombstone over the grave. The poor of the neighbourhood are in the evening regaled with a supper, during which their good wishes for the welfare of the soul of the departed are repeatedly expressed, the plates and other articles of pottery used at these funeral feasts being afterwards broken and left at the grave.

During the forty days following, tapers are kept burning in the house, and, on the fortieth, the

¹ Page 100.

genealogy of the deceased is read before the assembled company, prayers being offered for the repose of the souls of all his ancestors. These ceremonies are repeated at intervals during the space of three years, at the expiration of which the grave is opened, and the body exhumed. If it is found to be sufficiently decomposed, the bones are collected in a linen cloth, and conveyed in a basket, adorned with flowers, to the church, where they remain for nine days. The relatives visit the remains every evening, taking with them more *kólyva*, and, if the deceased has been a person of some standing in the neighbourhood, twelve priests and a bishop take part in the solemn Mass performed on the ninth day. The bones are then either put in a box and replaced in the grave, or added to the other ghastly heaps in the charnel-house of the church.

If the body is not found at the end of the three years to be satisfactorily decomposed, grave fears are entertained that the spirit is not at rest, and has not entirely abandoned the body. The most terrible curse that can be pronounced against a Greek is couched in the words : ‘ May the earth not eat you ! ’ For, if this curse take effect, the object of it will after death, it is believed, become that most dreaded of all spectres, a vampire. In order, therefore, to induce the body to ‘ dissolve,’ the same ceremonies and prayers are repeated during another three years.

CHAPTER VII

GREEK BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

THE essential points in which the Orthodox Greek differs from the Roman Catholic Church are : (1) the Holy Ghost being held to proceed from the Father only ; (2) the administration of the Eucharist in both kinds to the laity ; and (3) the substitution of pictures for images of the Virgin and Saints. Celibacy is required of the higher clergy, but not of the *papas* or secular priests, though they are forbidden to contract a second marriage. The former are drawn chiefly from the better classes, and in their capacities of Bishops and Archbishops wield a temporal as well as a spiritual authority over their flocks, the Ottoman Government having never interfered in the internal affairs of its Christian subjects, which are regulated in each diocese by a council of the chief inhabitants, presided over by the Bishop or Archbishop. These Primates also act as intermediaries between the Christians and Turkish civil authorities when they have any disagreement with Moslems.

Regular attendance at the services of the Greek Church is not required of women, especially before

marriage. Girls, as a rule, go to Mass only on great festivals and special occasions, when they sit—or rather stand, for seats are almost unknown in Eastern churches—apart from the men in a gallery called the *gynaikonitis*, which extends to the *bema*, or chancel, and is approached by an external staircase. It is recorded that St. Basil, having once detected a woman making signs to the officiating assistant-deacon during the celebration of the Mass, made it a rule that the eastern-most part of the *gynaikonitis* should be fitted with a curtain. The elderly women are the most assiduous church-goers, as they are less occupied with household duties, and their frequent appearance out of doors is not calculated to give rise to gossip. The churches are, however, open on week-days, and the younger women may then frequently be seen making their obeisances before the ‘Holy Gates,’ or lighting a taper in honour of an *eikon* of the Virgin-Mother or a favourite saint. Greek women and girls are also the most scrupulous observers of all the formulas prescribed by the Church and by custom with respect to fasts and feasts and the events of the ecclesiastical year generally. Like the Roman Catholics, they make the sign of the Cross before and after meals, and before their morning and evening prayers, which they repeat standing before the picture of the *Panaghia*, the ‘All Holy’ Virgin Mother, which is always illuminated by a tiny lamp.

Although Greek monasteries are to be found in every part of the Empire inhabited by members of the Orthodox Church, testifying to the popularity among men of a conventual life—at least in the past—few nunneries exist at the present day, and the number of inmates in those which still survive is very small. A cloistered life naturally offers but few attractions to women with whom marriage is the rule, and in whom family sentiment is so strongly developed. The nuns, who are popularly termed *kalóycrai*—‘good old women,’ are generally elderly and childless widows, or plain and portionless spinsters who, being without family ties or means of support, are glad of the asylum offered by the nunneries. The communities are, as a rule, very small, consisting sometimes of not more than six members, and the discipline is by no means very strict. The morals of the nuns generally at the present day would seem to be fairly good—so far, at least, as I have been able to ascertain. If, however, folk-poesy is any authority, this does not appear always to have been the case, for the humorous songs and stories of the Greeks contain, perhaps, as many allusions to the shortcomings of the ‘good old women’ as they do to those of the ‘good old men.’

The Greek year may be said, roughly speaking, to be divided pretty equally between fast days and feast days, both being observed with equal fidelity.

The long and frequent periods of abstinence ordained by the Church are indeed most rigorously kept, it being, apparently, accounted a greater sin to eat of forbidden food than to break one of the Ten Commandments. The women and girls of the lower orders especially often incapacitate themselves for work during Lent by living exclusively on bread and vegetables ; and to housewives in the Levant this period and the subsequent Easter feasting are a yearly trial, as all the native servants are more or less unfit for their duties. Even when seriously ill, no nourishing food will be taken, the patient deeming it ' better to fast and die than to eat and sin.' For no ' indulgences ' are granted by the clergy in this respect, though, if representations are made to them by a doctor, they will promise absolution to the sufferer for infringing the commands of the Church.

Besides Lent, there are three other great fasts—that of the Holy Apostles, which begins a week after Pentecost and terminates on the 29th of June ; that preparatory to the Feast of the Assumption, from the 1st to the 15th of August, when women and girls abstain even from oil ; and the forty days of Advent ; while Wednesdays and Fridays are, all the year round, days of abstinence. All sorts of strange beliefs and odd customs are found connected with these fasts and festivals, the origin and meaning of many of which it is impossible to discover ; the usual reply received

to inquiries being merely : ' Eh—*we* have it so,' accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders, indicating the superior position and privileges of the Orthodox.

In common with all the other Eastern Christians the Greeks adhere to the Old or Julian Calendar, and their year begins twelve days later than ours. The 1st of January is dedicated to St. Basil, who, in common with St. George, appears to have been a native of Cæsarea—or, as it is locally called, Kaisariyeh, in Cappadocia ; and on this day, children go from house to house singing odes in honour of the Saint, which invariably conclude with some complimentary lines to the occupants, wishing them ' a good year,' and requesting largesse. St. Basil is always described in these songs as a schoolboy, whose touch quickens inanimate objects into renewed life :—

The month's first day, the year's first day, the first of January,
The circumcision day of Christ, the feast-day of St. Basil !
St. Basil, see, is coming here, from Cappadocia coming ;
A paper in his hands he holds, and carries pen and ink-horn.

With pen and inkhorn doth he write, and reads he from the paper.

' Say, Basil, say, whence comest thou, and whither art thou wending ? '

' I from my home have now come forth, and I to school am going.'

' Sit down and eat, sit down and drink, sit down and sing thou for us ! '

' 'Tis only letters that I learn, of singing I know nothing.'

'O, then, if you your letters know, say us your *Alpha*,
Beta !'

He leant him there upon his staff, to say his *Alpha*, *Beta* ;
And though the staff was dry and dead, it put forth freshest
branches,
And on the topmost branch of all there perched and sang a
partridge.

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The Eve of Epiphany is in some localities observed by the Greeks as a Day of the Dead ; and, according to popular belief, a stream of gold is to be found in running water during a few minutes of this night. The country people accordingly hasten about midnight with their pitchers to the fountains and brooks, in order to catch, if possible, some of the precious fluid. Another superstition says that the plants bend their stems, and the trees bow their summits in adoration of Jesus Christ, on this Eve of the 'Feast of the Lights.' Popular tradition relates that a certain pious poor woman witnessed this miracle several times ; and one night she succeeded in tying her kerchief to the topmost branch of a tall poplar at the moment the tree was making its obeisance. Next day the kerchief was found flying from the crest, a proof of the miracle which could not fail to convince the hitherto incredulous. On this festival also the *Papas* goes round his parish to 'bless' each house in turn with holy water, using as *aspergillus* a bunch of sweet basil ; and

towards nightfall companies of boys with lanterns parade the streets singing before the houses of the wealthier citizens 'Odes' dramatically describing the Baptism of Christ. These ditties end with a couplet expressing the singers' good wishes for the morrow's festival and are acknowledged by the inmates with a handful of sweet biscuits and some small coins.

The Greek observance of the Carnival varies according to locality, but it is only in large towns that it at all partakes of the popular character of the Roman Catholic Carnival which precedes it. It is, however, chiefly to the Greek women of the better classes that the Carnival furnishes much amusement in the shape of fancy balls and masqued parties, the women of the lower orders being, as a rule, content with listening to the passing music—generally of a very primitive kind—and occasionally exchanging a little *badinage* through their grated windows with the young men of the quarter, who roam the streets after sunset in various disguises. On the last Sunday of the festal season this species of amusement begins in the afternoon, and is kept up till nine or ten o'clock. Then the shutters are closed, the Carnival is over, and a hard-boiled egg is handed to each person before going to bed, which 'shuts the mouth to flesh' until Easter Day, when it is 'opened' with another egg.

The Eve of Palm Sunday is sacred to Lazarus.

Most of the songs sung in the streets on this occasion are a curious medley of dialogue between Christ, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and complimentary speeches and good wishes to the neighbours. On the following day, which is called *Vaia*, similar songs are sung. On Holy Thursday every housewife boils a number of eggs with cochineal for the approaching Easter festival, and also bakes a quantity of cakes and sweet biscuits. At the hour when the Gospels are read in the churches she takes eggs to the number of the household, including the servants, and one over, places them in a napkin, and carries them to church, where she leaves them until Sunday. The supplementary egg is laid before the *Eikonostasion*, or Place of the Holy Pictures, and is afterwards kept as a remedy against all kinds of ills. Many of these eggs have traced upon them in elegant characters texts of Scripture and other sacred words.

Late in the evening of Good Friday, a solemn service is held in the churches. I was present on one of these occasions at the Metropolitan Church at Salonica, and was much impressed by the ceremonial. On entering we were conducted to stalls facing the archiepiscopal throne where sat the Archbishop in his resplendent sacerdotal robes and mitre, glittering with gold and gems. Near us, supported on trestles, was the *epitâphios*—a full-length picture of the Christ, to which all the Orthodox worshippers, as they entered the sacred

building, advanced, and then reverently kissed the semblance of the dead Saviour. Every class of the Orthodox community was represented in the congregation, from the polished Russian and Roumanian diplomat and Greek *archon* of name and lineage, to the ragged and barefooted urchin, who, unreprieved by pompous verger or beadle, pushed his way through the throng to take the place to which, as a son of the Church, he had an equal right with every other worshipper. When the ritual of chant and prayer had been performed, lighted tapers were distributed, the dead Christ was taken up by the clergy and carried outside and round the church, followed by the whole congregation.

The Resurrection is commemorated by the Eastern Church strictly 'in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week'—that is, about one o'clock on the morning of Easter Sunday—when a ceremony takes place of the same character as that performed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. On the stroke of midnight the Archbishop, or chief officiating priest, presents to the congregation a lighted taper with the words: 'Arise, and take the flame from the Eternal Light, and praise Christ, who is risen from the dead!' Those nearest to him light their tapers from his, and then pass on the flame to those behind them, until all the tapers are kindled. And then arises from a

thousand throats the triumphant Resurrection-Song of the Eastern Church :—

Christ has arisen from the dead,
By death He death hath trampled on ;
To those laid in the graves Life having given !

At its conclusion, the Easter greeting, 'Christ is risen !' accompanied by a kiss on the cheek, is given by one friend to another, which is responded to by another kiss and the words : 'Truly He is risen !' On emerging into the open air, shots are discharged from fire-arms in honour of the event, an old custom which is still adhered to, in spite of the prohibitions annually issued by the authorities.

At the hour of early Mass the churches are again crowded with the worshippers who have been shriven on the previous day, and now partake of the Communion. At its conclusion more salutations of 'Christ is risen !' are exchanged as they wend their way homewards to breakfast on red eggs, Easter cakes, and coffee ; and then, as an old writer says, 'they run into such excesses of mirth and riot, agreeable to the light and vain humour of that people, that they seem to be revenged of their sobriety, and to make compensation to the devil for their late temperance and mortification towards God.' The rest of the day is given up to relaxation and feasting, the most important event for the women and girls especially being the public promenade in the afternoon, for which they don their new summer dresses, the

preparation of which has, it may well be supposed, much occupied their minds during the season of mortification.

The changes of the seasons are still popularly celebrated by the Greeks, and more especially the coming of the spring and the rebirth of Nature. In April the swallows are welcomed with songs, which recall the *Khelidonisma* of the ancients ; while on May-Day wreaths of flowers and branches are twined and hung over courtyard gateways in honour of the season, and children go from house to house chanting their May-day songs.

An interesting custom called the '*Klithona*' is observed in Thessaly at the Feast of the Summer Solstice, or the 'Eve of St. John.' It is, however, as a rule, performed only in the family circle, and many people long resident in the country are ignorant of it. At sunset, a large jar is filled with water and placed in the garden. Round it the family assemble, each with a leaf or flower, which he or she throws in, a wild dance and chant being kept up all the time. The jar is then carefully covered with a linen cloth, and the youngest of the party goes through the ceremony of 'locking' it with the house-key. It is finally set aside until the following day at noon, when the family assemble for the 'unlocking.' The cloth is removed, and each looks anxiously to see if his or her leaf or flower is floating on the water, as that foretells a long life, while an immersed leaf or

flower portends an early death. A general sprinkling then ensues. The young people chase each other with glasses of water from the jar, and consider a thorough drenching lucky. Singing is kept up all the time, and an occasional improvised couplet containing a sly personal allusion adds to the general merriment.

In Macedonia the ceremony differs a little, and is generally observed only by young girls and unmarried women, who often make up little parties for the occasion. One of the number is sent to fill a large jar of water at the well or fountain, with the injunction not to open her lips until she returns, no matter who may accost her. Into this jar each maiden drops some small object, such as a ring, bead, or glass bracelet, which is called the *klithona*. A cloth is then carefully tied over the mouth of the jar, which is left out all night under the stars. The youths of the neighbourhood are not unfrequently on the alert to discover the hiding-place of the jar, which, if found, they rob of its contents, which the owners recover only by paying a forfeit. If all, however, goes well, the jar is uncovered on the following evening at sunset, and one of the maidens, blindfolded, plunges her bared arm into the water, and, drawing out the objects one by one, recites over each a distich, which is received as an augury propitious or the reverse of the matrimonial prospects of its owner. After supper the bonfire of St. John is

lighted before the courtyard gate ; and after taking down and casting into it the now faded garlands hung over the doors on May-Day, the young people leap through the flames, fully persuaded that ' the fire of St. John will not burn them.'

In Thessaly and Macedonia it is customary in times of prolonged drought to send a procession of children round to all the wells and springs of the neighbourhood. At their head walks a girl adorned with flowers, whom they drench with water at each halting-place while singing this invocation :—

Perperia, all fresh bedewed,
Freshen all the neighbourhood ;
By the woods, on the highway,
As thou goest, to God now pray :
' O my God, upon the plain,
Send thou us a still, small rain ;
That the fields may fruitful be,
And vines in blossom we may see ;
That the grain be full and sound,
And wealthy grow the folks around ;
Wheat and barley,
Ripen early,
Maize and cotton now take root,
Rice and rye and currant shoot ;
Gladness fill our gardens all,
For the drought may fresh dews fall ;
Water send us by the pail,
Grain in heaps beneath the flail ;
Bushels grow from every ear,
Each vine-stem a burden bear !
Out with drought and poverty—
Rain and plenty let us see !'

The Greeks would seem to have assimilated, to a greater extent than any other Christian nation, the heathen festivals and observances of their ancestors ; and the classical *genii loci* have only slightly changed their names. At sanctuaries, for instance, formerly dedicated to the Sun, homage is now paid to the Prophet—or rather ‘ Saint ’—Elias, and almost every high hill and promontory is now, as of old, sacred to him. Power over rain is also attributed to this Saint ; and, in time of drought, people flock to his churches and monasteries to supplicate the Sun-god in his other character of ‘ The Rainy Zeus.’ Athena, the divine Virgin, is now the *Panaghia*, the ‘ All Holy ’ Virgin Mother, and she has also supplanted Eos, the Dawn, the Mother of the Sun, who opens the gates of the East through which her Son will pass. The Christian celebrations of the annual festivals of these Saints are, consequently, merely survivals of pagan anniversaries, held at the church or monastery of the Saint who has replaced the heathen divinity. At the more celebrated of these *Paneghýria* a kind of fair is held, which is resorted to by crowds of pilgrims from the country round and the adjacent towns. Caravans may be seen wending their way along the mountain-paths leading to the monastery, men and women mounted on mules or donkeys, or leading horses laden with panniers full of little ones. On arriving, the devotees at once repair to the church, and,

after lighting the customary taper, their first care will be to lay on the shrine of the tutelar Saint any offering which they may have vowed during the past year in earnest of benefits asked or received through his mediation. These offerings often take the shape of a gold or silver aureole for his *eikon*, or perhaps a hand or arm, which is fastened on that part of the painting. Gold coins, too, are often stuck on the cheek of the *Panaghia*, and napkins, embroidered with a representation in gold thread of the Queen of Heaven, are presented to her shrine in return for favours granted.

As the accommodation afforded by the neighbouring villages is generally quite inadequate for the number of pilgrims, they are allowed to sleep in the church, and the votive offerings which the visitors leave behind in return for this indulgence constitute quite a little revenue for the monks or priests who guard the shrine. Their pious duties accomplished, the pilgrims turn their attention to feasting and merry-making. For at mealtimes the whole company, throwing off for the time being their ordinary exclusiveness, unite in a gigantic picnic on the greensward, feasting on the good things they have brought with them, supplemented by purchases from the numerous hawkers of fruits, sweets, and cakes whom such an event is sure to attract to the neighbourhood. Dealers in other wares, too, are not lacking, who find plenty of customers among the female portion of the

assembly for their gum-mastic, combs, pocket mirrors, rouge, antimony, and other trifles. Music, singing, dancing, and story-telling are the chief amusements, which are kept up to what is considered in the East a late hour. At dawn, however, all are again astir for the early Mass, to which they are summoned by the convent bell, or more primitive *symandro*.

There are also many sacred springs which are honoured by yearly festivals, held on the day dedicated to the Saint who has supplanted the local divinity, a romantic and solitary situation in the neighbourhood of a cavern or grotto being the usual characteristic of an *Aghiasma*. On the occasion of these festivals, multitudes flock to the fountains, bringing with them their sick to drink the waters, which, however, do not as a rule possess any medicinal qualities, but owe their healing virtues solely to belief in the patronage of the tutelar saint. The shrubs and bushes in the vicinity are usually found decorated with tufts of hair and scraps of clothing, affixed as votive offerings by grateful recipients of the Saint's favours.

And yet, transformed as so many of these pagan divinities have been into Madonnas and Christian Saints, a goodly number still retain their ancient forms and attributes. Milton's 'genius' still haunts

spring and vale
Edged with poplar pale,

and is often both heard and seen by lonely shepherd, belated traveller, or maiden who has put off till sunset her daily task of fetching water from the fountain. To the first he may appear as a man-eating monster ; but the last he invites in seductive language to visit the beautiful palace in which he resides beneath the water of his well or fountain. Some of these *Stoicheia* also, like the hamadryads of old, dwell in the trees, but have the same propensities as their brethren inhabiting the mountains, rocks, and waters, and can only be slain by that popular hero of Greek folk-song, 'The Widow's Son,' or by the youngest of three brothers, and many accounts of these contests are to be met with both in folk-ballad and folk-tale.

The classical Nereid, Lamia, and Siren have also survived, and display very much the same propensities as their prototypes. The first, though they occupy in the popular imagination of the Greeks a place similar to the Fairies of more northern countries, and like them are proverbial for their beauty, differ from them in being always of the full stature of mortals, and also in being almost universally malevolent. Like the *Stoicheia*, they haunt fountains, wells, rivers, mountains, sea-caves, and other lonely places, and generally shun human society. They are, as a rule, held to be solitary in their habits ; but may occasionally be seen, clad in gleaming white, dancing in companies, through moonlit glades or on the glistening

sands of lonely isles and promontories.¹ It is fatal to see them when crossing a river, unless a priest be at hand to exorcise them by reading certain passages of Scripture, which are believed to counteract the spells of the 'Devil's Daughters,' as they are also termed. It is usually, however, sought to propitiate them by some complimentary epithet, such as 'the Beautiful,' or 'the Good Ladies,' in the same way as the Furies were formerly termed the Eumenides, and as the ill-omened owl is, at the present day, euphemistically named the 'Bird of Joy.' They are said to possess the power of banefully affecting women of whose beauty they are jealous, and to be in the habit of carrying off young children should they chance to approach their haunts unprotected. The fancy of the Nereids for newborn infants is, as I have already noted in the chapter dealing with Family-ceremonies, a source of great anxiety to mothers and nurses.

All kinds of maladies are attributed to the malevolence of the 'Beautiful Ladies,' and the women and children thus afflicted are termed 'possessed,' and can only be cured by residence in a church or convent, or by pilgrimage to

¹ The Greek inhabitants of a coast village near Salonica relate that companies of Nereids may often be seen dancing in the moonlight on the adjacent seashore, and are careful to give a wide berth to the haunts of these 'Outlanders,' as all such uncanny visitants are collectively termed.

some holy shrine. These nymphs also occasionally fall in love with mortal men, whom they reward with great prosperity if they return their affection and prove faithful. But woe to the unlucky wight who ventures to slight their advances, for the Nereids are certain to revenge themselves for the slight by afflicting him with some dire calamity. They are said to exercise this power chiefly at the noontide hour, when they rest under the shade of trees, usually planes and poplars, and near springs and streams ; and the wary peasant, fearful of the consequences of annoying these capricious beings, will carefully abstain from disturbing their repose. Phenomena of nature, such as whirlwinds and storms, are popularly ascribed to the agency of the Nereids, and it is customary to crouch down when they are supposed to be passing overhead ; for if this precaution be not taken, the Nereids seize the too irreverent individual, and carry him or her off to the mountains. Offerings of milk, honey, and cakes are made to them, and placed in certain spots which they are believed to frequent ; and the country-women, when they see the wind-driven clouds scudding overhead, mutter ' milk and honey ' to avert all evil from themselves. Storms are, indeed, among Eastern races generally connected in folk fancy with demons, whose wild flights from place to place cause, or rather constitute, these elemental disturbances, and the church bells are rung to frighten them

away.¹ Tempestuous weather is also sometimes attributed to the festivities attendant upon a wedding among the Nereids.

The little waterspouts formed of gathered wreaths of spray so often seen in the Ægean Sea, are looked upon with great awe by the dwellers in the islands and on the seaboard. 'The Lamia of the Sea is abroad,' say the peasants and fisher-folk, when they see the wind-driven spray wreaths; and having recourse to Christian aid when frightened by pagan superstitions, and *vice versâ*, they cross themselves repeatedly and mutter prayers to the *Panaghia* for protection against these demons of the air and water. The Lamiae are generally described as ill-favoured and evilly disposed women who haunt desert places and sea-shores. Sometimes, however, they assume the forms of beautiful women, who, like the Sirens, lure men to destruction by their sweet voices and graceful dancing, or, as recorded in this Salonica folk-song, lay wagers with them in which the mortal is sure to be the loser:—

Then from the sea the Lamia came, the Lamia of the ocean—
'O play to me, my Yanni, play, make with thy pipe sweet
music!

If I should weary of the dance, thou for thy wife shalt have
me;

¹ As at Malta, where during the severe thunderstorms to which that island is subject, to the pandemonium of the elements is added that of the discordant clanging of church bells.

If thou shouldst weary of thy pipe, I'll take away thy sheep-cotes.'

And all day long, three days he piped, three days and nights he whistled ;

Till Yanni was quite wearied out, and sorely worn with piping. His flocks of sheep she then drove off, of all his goats she robbed him ;

And now perforce he works for hire, and labours for a master.

Numerous Greek and Bulgarian songs and stories also relate the adventures of mortal men who have wedded Lamiaë and have had children by them. But woe to the man who has such a helpmate ! For she can neither spin, weave, knit, nor sew, and is equally incapable of sweeping, cooking, baking, or taking care of the domestic animals. And so firm a hold has this belief on the popular mind, that the expression 'a Lamia's sweepings' exists as a domestic proverb, frequently quoted by indignant housewives to their maid-servants.

The Fates of the modern Greeks closely resemble their classical prototypes. They are popularly regarded as permanently occupied in spinning the thread symbolical of the life of man, and preside more especially over the three great events of his existence, birth, marriage, and death—the 'Three Evils of Destiny.'¹ Although the Fates are held to be perpetually roaming about in the fulfilment of their arduous labours, the peaks of the Thessalian Olympus rising beyond the wide gulf of Salonica would appear to con-

¹ Τα τρία κακά τῆς Μοίρας.

stitute their special abode ; and it is to this Mountain of the classic Greek Gods that those who desire their assistance turn to utter the invocation :

O ! from the summit of Olympus high,
 From the three limits of the sky,
 Where dwell the Dealers out of Destinies,
 O ! may my own Fate hear me,
 And, hearing, hover near me !

There are in the East no laws interfering with the calling of Witches, and not only in Thessaly—of old famous for its *máyissas*—but also in all the Balkan provinces and principalities, they and their powers are held in great estimation by members of all creeds. To the Witch-wife repair love-sick maidens and jealous wives, childless women and mothers with ailing children, seekers of lost or stolen property, and for each and all of her clients the Wise Woman has a specific. Like the witch of Theocritus, she makes use of the magic power of moonlight to compose her spells and potions ; or, crouching hag-like over her charcoal brazier, throws on the glowing embers laurel-leaves, salt, flour, cloves, and what not, muttering strange words meanwhile, or droning mystic incantations. Fortune-telling is also largely practised by the *máyissas*, and is performed by means of cards, or a tray of beans, coins, and other small objects, manipulated according to some form of calculation. Some years ago I formed one of a party of resident

Europeans at a Witch's fortune-telling in the Greek quarter of Salonica. The abode of the 'spaywife' was a spacious but gloomy apartment, with a tiny barred window and cavernous chimney place. Amid the darkness of the unceiled rafters flitted ghostly white pigeons, and when, after a little while, our eyes had become accustomed to the dimness, we descried the typical black cat, whose green eyes regarded us suspiciously from one of the smoke-blackened cross-beams overhead.

If 'the oracles are dumb,' dreams now serve as a very good substitute for them, and the woman who is not fortunate enough to possess a 'Dream-book' of her own has recourse to the skill of the Wise Woman, who interprets her dream by means of certain formulas handed down, no doubt, from the remotest antiquity. For magical secrets are generally hereditary in families, and the daughter will, as a rule, succeed the mother as village *máyissa*. In addition to her power of 'spaying fortunes,' the Witch is also able to aid a person who has been the victim of a robbery to discover the thief. A not inconsiderable branch of her trade consists in providing love-spells and potions, and—it may occasionally be—spells of a less innocent character. Faithless lovers had need beware, and furnish themselves with counter-spells, when deserted maidens have recourse to the aid of the *máyissa*, by whose aid a 'wasting

curse ' may be laid on the offender. Some of these curses are thus expressed : ' Mayst thou [naming the person] become attenuated as a thread, and pass through a needle's eye ! ' ' Mayst thou shrink to the size of my finger ! ' while others are in the form of a distich, as for instance :—

Be, who will not love this maid,
Five years on a sick-bed laid !

Persons believing themselves to be sufferers from the effects of such a spell—for a hint is generally conveyed to its subject—must naturally have recourse to the Witch for its removal. Her skill, too, is often in request to exorcise that most dreaded of all mysterious powers, the ' evil eye.' For, notwithstanding the innumerable domestic preventives and antidotes used, both children and adults are often found to be suffering from the effects of the enviously malignant gaze of some evilly disposed neighbour. Fumigations of various kinds are usually resorted to in order to dispel the baneful influence, and the wood of the olive-tree, the palm-branches blessed by the priest on Palm Sunday, or, if it can be procured, a scrap of the suspected person's dress, will be burnt for this purpose.

It would, however, be difficult to enumerate all the means to which recourse is had for dissipating the effects of the ' evil eye,' as they are about as numerous as the preservatives against it. Among

the latter I may mention the bunches of charms, consisting of gold coins, pointed bits of coral and blue glass, cloves of garlic, blood-stones, cornelians, and crosses, which are worn on the person, or fastened to the caps of children and the headstalls of horses, mules, and donkeys ; and the horse-shoes, boars' tusks, and hares' heads hung on the walls of houses and other buildings to preserve them from this baneful and mysterious influence.

Some people are quite notorious for their power of 'casting the evil eye,' and, though the propensity is much dreaded, they on the other hand enjoy a certain amount of consideration, as their neighbours are naturally careful not to offend them in any way. Red-haired persons are particularly suspected, and blue or grey eyes, being comparatively rare in the East, are considered especially baleful. The 'evil eye' may, however, also be cast unwittingly, and without *malice prepense*, and seems in this instance to be a survival of the notion of the 'envy of the gods' ; and it is impossible in the Levant to speak admiringly or approvingly of any person or thing without being met with the exclamation : ' O, I beg of you ! —don't give it the evil eye ! '

It would, however, prove a stupendous if not an impossible task to collect all the folk-beliefs and customs of the Balkan Greeks and their neighbours, so connected are they with every detail of domestic life, and with such varied

circumstances ; and one generally learns them only by transgressing them. I once got into terrible trouble by taking into my room a soft, fluffy, bewildered little owlet which I found one night between the shutter and the window, and thought of keeping as a pet. Great was the dismay, however, of the old Greek nurse when I showed her my prize next morning. 'It was a sign of death,' she cried, and some terrible calamity was sure to happen in the family. By a strange coincidence, a pet kid which was kept in the garden was on that morning found dead ; and after this fatality there was no gainsaying the superstition.

The most trivial circumstances, too, connected with the birth of a child are considered good and bad omens, according to the interpretation given to them. Trifling accidents happening on a wedding-day take on a gloomy signification, as, also, the breaking of a looking-glass, the accidental spilling of oil (to spill wine, however, is lucky), sweeping the house after the master has departed on a journey, meeting the funeral of a priest, a hare crossing the path, and a thousand other little everyday occurrences. Tuesdays as well as Fridays are for the Greeks days of evil augury, while on Saturday it is considered unlucky either to begin or finish any kind of work, and no money must be paid away on a Monday or Saturday will find your purse empty. Things lucky and things unlucky, things to be done and things not to be done, would indeed make an interminable list.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WALLACHS, THEIR CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS

WHILE the highlands of Asia Minor are peopled by a variety of nomadic tribes, the Vlachs or Wallachs are, with the exception of the Gipsies, the only nomads found in the Balkan provinces; and so essentially pastoral are they that among the various races with whom they come into daily contact their very name is a synonym for 'shepherd.'

These nomads pass the winter months in the lowlands, where they set up afresh every year their circular huts of wattled reeds and branches, which they line snugly within with hangings of home-woven goat's-hair cloth, the floor being spread with thick native matting and brightly coloured home-woven rugs. Mattresses and cushions, covered with stout home-made stuffs, are also ranged round the walls, forming seats by day and couches at night. At Eastertide the lambs in their thousands are taken to the neighbouring towns for sale, and these disposed of, the communities break up their winter camp and prepare for their summer migrations. These are carried out in leisurely fashion, the high mountain pasturages

being reached only when the summer heats have set in. On the way from one pasturage to another the animals are marshalled into a solid phalanx, the goats in front, the sheep next, and then the mules and donkeys laden with the tents and tent furniture, together with the great saddlebags packed with dairy utensils and household goods and chattels generally, while the male nomads, garbed in *fustanellas* and shaggy cloaks of hue equally grimy, with gun on shoulder and attended by their fierce Molossian dogs, guard the company on either hand from the perils of the way.

A Wallach encampment at its various halting-places when on the road forms a picturesque and interesting spectacle, the spot chosen for it being generally the common, or 'green,' found on the outskirts of every Balkan town and village. And I was some years ago fortunate enough to have an opportunity of visiting such an encampment on the wide *meidan* just outside the Vardar Gate of Salonica, under the picturesque towers and battlements of those ancient walls which have withstood many a siege. As soon as the halt is called, the pack animals are relieved of their burdens, the sheepfolds set up and the black tents pitched by the men, while the boys and dogs round up the flocks, and the women and girls do the milking, prepare the evening meal, or nurse the babies.

Arrived at the pasturages, which are rented from the villagers collectively, or, in the case of

Crown lands, from the Forest Inspectors, the shepherds build summer quarters of pine branches and brushwood for the women and children, who remain in these little settlements while the men and boys wander with their flocks and fierce dogs over the high grassy alps, sleeping with them in the open wrapped in their shaggy *capas* of thick home-made felt-like cloth.

The social organization of these nomadic shepherds is quite patriarchal in character. For the most part they are grouped into small communities called *stania* or 'sheep-folds,' comprising a score or so of families under the headship of an hereditary chieftain, who governs his little clan on quite aristocratic principles and himself conducts all its business transactions with the outside world. In his own family, too, the *tsellinga*—as such a Wallachian patriarch is termed—is an absolute autocrat, for his younger brothers and his sons may not sit down to table with him, but must wait upon the head of the clan and his guests. Many of these chieftains are men of substance and possess valuable and interesting heirlooms in the shape of silver cups, powder-flasks, etc., which are veritable works of art; while their womenkind wear with their native costumes on high-days and holidays, a variety of belt-clasps, bracelets, necklaces and other ornaments of silver which, if somewhat ponderous, are of beautiful design and workmanship.

The Wallachs also of the burgher class who are not flockmasters are mostly engaged in pursuits which require them to lead a more or less nomadic life. The wealthier class consists of merchants who trade in Italy and Spain, Austria and Russia, and who are often absent for periods extending over many years—a mode of life which they seldom renounce until obliged by age to do so. The inferior class of traders do not, as a rule, leave the Ottoman Empire, but travel with goods of all kinds for sale from one town or village to another, like the peddlers in England in the Feudal Period, when, as in the East at the present day, drapers' shops were few in provincial towns and non-existent in the country. And there is also another industrial class of Wallachs who go to the towns for the greater part of the year to work as tailors, embroiderers, furriers, gold- and silver-smiths, etc.

The homes to which these nomadic shepherds and wandering traders return are now in the mountains, though previously to the Ottoman conquest, the Wallachs occupied the plains of Thessaly in such numbers that the province acquired the name of 'Great Wallachia,' while Ætolia and Acarnania were called 'Little Wallachia.' But with the true Aryan hatred of servitude and passion for self-government, this people preferred a life of hardship, with freedom, in the mountains, to one of comfort, with subjection, in the plains; and, retiring before the Turkish armies,

they took up their abode in the lofty mountain ranges of Olympus and Pindus, where they founded numerous large villages or townships. The most considerable of these are Vlacho-livadia—‘The Meadows of the Vlachs,’ on the west of Mount Olympus, and Mezzovo—‘Mid-mountain,’ in the heart of the Pindus range, another important centre being Voskopoli—‘the Shepherd’s Town.’ A large number of Wallachs are also to be found in Albania between Antivari and Dulcigno, in the mountainous districts near Elbassan and Berat, and throughout Macedonia; while in northern and central Greece they are constantly to be met with. The township of Vlacho-livadia contains some four hundred houses and five handsome churches presided over by a bishop; while, grouped around on the neighbouring hills, are four other Wallach villages, surrounded by fields and vineyards. Mezzovo is the most picturesquely situated town it is possible to imagine, clinging as it does to both sides of a sublime ravine, overhung by the highest crests of Pindus. These crests tower so perpendicularly on either hand that not till long after sunrise is the *Proselion*, or ‘sunny side’ of the town, out of shadow, the opposite side being appropriately termed the *Anelion*, or ‘sunless.’ Mezzovo is also surrounded by Wallach villages, the most remarkable of these being Kalyarites, which is built on a hillside so steep that the highest houses are five hundred feet above

the lowest, and the almost vertical streets are mere zigzag paths cut into steps. In these elevated situations the snow lies for five months of the year, and the villages are inhabited in winter almost exclusively by priests, old men, women, and children. Under these circumstances, there is little communication with the surrounding country, and it is customary for each family to lay in ample supplies of oil, rice, flour, and other provisions, as also a good stack of firewood.

Conspicuous in these mountain homes are, however, the industry and thrift of the Wallach villagers. Cornfields and vineyards clothe the steep hillsides, and numerous fruits and vegetables flourish in the terraced gardens surrounding every dwelling. Well watered, too, are these gardens by streamlets issuing from the numerous mountain springs which supply every part of the village with pure and delicious water. The houses are chiefly one-storied, and, like those of the Greek mountain villages, are roofed with broad slabs of limestone which require, in addition to their other fastenings, heavy stones to prevent their being displaced by the furious wind-storms to which these elevated regions are exposed, storms which, as they sweep through the hills, not infrequently, in spite of these precautions, carry away the cottage roofs.

Hospitality is a marked characteristic of the Wallachs. But as it is seldom that an English traveller has an opportunity of seeing anything of the

family life of these interesting people, I have been allowed by a friend to make use of the following description of the household of a burgher of Mezzovo :—

‘ Most snugly furnished, in Eastern fashion, was the room in which I was installed by my kindly Wallachian hosts. There was neither chair nor table ; but the floor was covered with thick, richly coloured rugs, the handiwork of the household ; and along the wall on either side of the hearth and extending under the windows, was a range of comfortable cushions. The whole of the wall opposite the hearth was occupied by a most artistically designed and elaborately carved wardrobe, also of native workmanship ; and thence the additional rugs, etc., were produced with which at night my bed was made up. . . . While supper was being prepared, the usual Turkish service of coffee and cigarettes was preceded by the Græco-Slav service of preserves and a glass of cold water. For my evening meal, a Turkish *sofra*, or low round table, was brought in, and an excellent repast of various courses served, of which I partook seated on my cushion on the floor in the warmly coloured, brightly lighted chamber. Like the Wallachs generally, my hosts were handsome, pleasant, courteous people with innumerable pretty children. Among the bairns, particularly, the arrival of the stranger from the West appeared to cause great excitement and curiosity. But

when their mother tried to put them out of the room, and away from the room-door, I begged that they might be allowed to remain. So, after a time, one after another they mustered up courage to approach, take my hand, kiss it, and press it to their little foreheads; and I kissed their fair little faces in return.'

The frequent and protracted absence of the men of the family to which I have just referred, naturally throws great responsibility and various duties on the women, who consequently occupy a degree of social independence and influence unusual among the Christian races of the Balkans. Far away as the men of the family may be, the little field, vineyard and garden of the homestead must be cultivated, their harvests reaped, and the produce converted into winter provisions. The domestic animals have to be tended, the sheep shorn, and the wool prepared for the loom which occupies a corner of every dwelling. The Wallach women excel in the manufacture of the thick cloth called *skouti*, largely used for clothing and domestic purposes, and they also weave the carpets and rugs of which the furniture of their houses chiefly consists.

Cheerfully content with their laborious life, the wives of the traders willingly add to their many duties that of waiting on their husbands with the most assiduous attention during the short and rare periods they spend in the bosom of the

families. Their daughters are from an early age accustomed to both domestic and out-of-door labour, and in their capacity of shepherdesses figure frequently in the folk-songs of their Greek neighbours. The *Vlachopoula* may often be seen returning from the fountain or the riverside, bearing on her back, besides a water-cask, the load of wet linen which she has washed, with a metal basin poised on her head, and her untiring hands occupied in twisting thread with the spindle. Nor does she neglect to embroider in bright wools and silks, dyed with her own hands, her picturesque native costume, or to knit and stitch with coloured wools the socks she sells to the shepherds. No stranger, however, can command her services, for the Wallach women manifest an invincible repugnance to leaving their mountain homes, to which they are devotedly attached.

Wallach women are, as a rule, exceedingly handsome, with regular features, dark hair and eyes, and small hands and feet. The inhabitants of Voskopolis and Monastir, and those living in the neighbourhood of Lake Ochrida, are considered the most elegant and refined of all the Southern Wallachs, the *Voskopolitissas*, as the women of the former town are termed, being distinguished by the fairness of their skins and their lighter-coloured hair. Their countenances are fine and open, their gestures and movements most graceful, and their demeanour is particularly affable and obliging,

while their menkind make use of elegant phrases and refined language to every one, 'even to their wives,' as one writer on this people quaintly remarks. The women, however, notwithstanding their greater refinement, are as industrious as the other women of their race, and do not disdain to work in the fields, tend the flocks, and fulfil all the other multifarious duties which fall to their share.

The women belonging to the more sedentary portion of the Wallach communities may be said to be equally well educated with the Greek women of the country towns and villages ; but their nomadic sisters naturally receive little or no education. Previous to the union of the Principalities, in 1861, under the name of Roumania, the Greek language was alone taught in their schools and used in the services of the Church. Close contact and everyday intercourse with the surrounding Greek population had also Hellenised the men of certain villages, and caused them to a great extent to abandon the use of their mother tongue. But as Plato wisely said : ' It is the women who retain the old forms of speech ' ; and the Wallach women, though conversant with Greek, still clung to their nationality and continued to use their soft Roumanian tongue. The Roumanian author Bolintineanu, who was greatly struck by this conservatism—as other travellers have also been—wrote half a century ago : ' If ever this people should escape from servitude, if ever it should

possess a cultivated language, a literature, a history—in a word, a name—it will owe it to the women.’ The language spoken by the Wallachs of Southern Turkey still differs little from that used in Roumania proper, save for a certain admixture of Greek words referring more particularly to modern civilized life. And within a year of the creation of the Principality of Roumania, a propaganda was organized with the object of substituting the Roumanian for the Greek language in the churches and schools of their settlements south of the Danube. The leader of this movement was Mr. Apostolu Margaritu, a Macedonian Wallach educated at Bucharest, who, despite Greek opposition and intrigue, succeeded in many localities in exciting a national feeling in his fellow-countrymen, whom he soon induced to employ Roumanian instead of Greek teachers in their schools. On the elevation of Roumania to a kingdom in 1877, this propaganda received a fresh impulse by the appointment of a Roumanian Consul-General at Salonica, which city immediately became the headquarters of an active rivalry between the two nationalities.

The customs of the Wallachs at the birth of a child do not differ materially from those of the Greeks. The Nereids feared by the latter on these occasions are merely replaced by the Stringæ, who, like them, are wicked spirits bearing ill-will especially to newborn infants. It is usual for those

in attendance to cast a stone behind them with the words: 'I cast this in the mouth of the Stringæ!' Baptism is also performed according to the rites of the Orthodox Church, above described.

Although the Wallach communities maintain, as I have already mentioned, various social relations with the Greeks, they do not to any great extent intermarry with them. Indeed, it is said that while Wallach men occasionally take Greek brides, no Wallach girl ever marries out of her own community. But the customs connected with marriage among the Wallachs—with the exception, of course, of the religious rite—differ materially from those observed by the Greeks, and bear a considerable resemblance to the ceremonies of the ancient Romans. A young villager, wishing to marry, employs no go-between, but presenting himself in person to the father of the maiden of his choice, asks his permission to wed his daughter. If he is considered an eligible match, the father assents, and the suitor ratifies the contract by opening his purse and placing some pieces of gold in the hand of his future father-in-law. A similar sum is also paid on the wedding-day, and recalls the *coemptio* customary among the ancient Romans. The bride brings no dowry to her husband, but only a trousseau and 'plenishing,' which she has herself manufactured from the raw material supplied by the flocks and fields,

dyed in brilliant and lasting colours, and embellished with heavy embroidery.

The preliminaries settled, the betrothal is publicly announced in the *stani*, or village sheepfold. A week before the day fixed for the commencement of the marriage festivities, the girls of the village go in a troop to the forest to cut firewood for the use of the young couple. They choose at the same time a branch having at its extremity five twigs. On one they fasten an apple, and on the other four, tufts of red wool, the apple being an emblem of love and maternity, and the wool symbolical of the household thrift and industry which are the glory of every Wallach woman. This *flamboro*, as it is termed, is carried in triumph back to the village, accompanied by shouts of '*Troe, flamboro! Troe, cokkella!*' when it is fixed on the roof of the bride's abode. The home ceremonies attendant upon a wedding occupy several days, and—as with the provincial Greeks, are made the occasion of great merry-making by the village maidens, who are invited to dress and adorn the bride for the ceremony, and to assist in the various domestic preparations for the important event.

On the Sunday of the wedding week the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, goes to fetch home the bride to his father's house. On the morning of this day, while some of the girls are busy 'busking the bride,' others assemble, dressed

in their holiday costumes, at the bridegroom's home, and while he is being carefully shaved for the auspicious occasion, they dance round him, singing wedding songs. The marriage which, so far, has taken rather the form of a sale, is now transformed in fancy by the singers into something like a wedding by capture :

He found the maiden all alone,
 Beneath a willow-tree ;
 And lightly took her 'neath his arm,
 And with her far did flee.

The bridegroom's toilet completed, he sets out on horseback, escorted by a number of friends on foot, for the abode of his betrothed. The arrival of the procession is announced by one of the party, who starts a little in advance of the rest. In return for his news the herald receives at the cottage door a large ring-shaped cake, for pieces of which a struggle ensues as soon as the other young men come up, the original possessor doing his best to retain his property. The bride, bedizened in all her wedding finery, is led forth and mounted on a horse, and accompanied by her own friends in addition to those of the bridegroom, is now conducted to her new home. On the arrival of the procession at its destination, a similar struggle takes place for a cake presented by the bridegroom's mother to the messenger who announces the approach of the bridal party.

A singular rite of purely Latin origin is now performed by the bride. As she is lifted from her horse at the threshold, butter or honey is handed to her, with which she proceeds to anoint the door, signifying that she brings with her into the house peace, plenty, and joy. The word *uxor*, originally *unxor*, is derived from *ungere*, 'to anoint,' and a commentator on Terence thus describes this ceremony: '*Uxor dicitur . . . ad ungendis postibus . . . hoc est quod, quum puellæ unberunt, maritorum postes unguebant.*' The bride salutes her future father- and mother-in-law by respectfully kissing their hands before the assembled company, and is then conducted to the corner of a divan on which she passes the night. On the following day the marriage ceremony is performed according to the rite of the Greek Church already described. Feasting and dancing occupy the remainder of the day, and are resumed at intervals until Wednesday evening, when the wedded couple are at last left to themselves. On the following day the young wife may be already seen busily spinning or working at her loom in the open air, still dressed in her wedding costume.

Though as members of the 'Orthodox' Greek Church, the Wallachs have assimilated all the Christian, and many of the classical, observances of the Greeks relating to death, they still retain among their funeral customs some which would appear to be survivals rather of Roman than of

Greek pagan rites. The Lares, for instance, are still honoured on the anniversary of the saint under whose special protection each family is placed. On the eve of such celebrations the house undergoes a thorough cleaning and white-washing, the furniture is scrubbed and polished, the mats and rugs are shaken and beaten, and everything that will bear washing is washed. The day is observed as a festival, and the poorest family will spread a table with dishes prepared specially for the occasion. While these are being partaken of, allusion is made by name to deceased relatives, to whom invocations are addressed. They are prayed to seat themselves at the table, where covers have been laid for them, and to take their share of the good things prepared in their honour. Another pagan festival which the Wallachs in common with the inhabitants of Roumania celebrate in honour of the dead, is the *Rusalu* or *Rosalia*. This festival is held in summer, and on every day of the six weeks during which it is prolonged, a tribute of fresh roses is laid on the graves of departed relatives and friends.

The Christianity of the Wallachs, like that of the Greeks, may be said to consist chiefly in keeping fast and feast days, in the adoration of saints, holy pictures, and relics, and in the observance of all the legendary customs by which the events of the ecclesiastical year are honoured. These customs, though in the main similar to those of

the neighbouring Greeks, differ somewhat in their details, and others are identical with the religious folk-customs of the Trans-Danubian Roumanians.

On New Year's Day the children take olive-branches and go from house to house to compliment the neighbours with their good wishes, in return for which they receive little presents. On the second day of the year, every stranger who may enter a house is required to throw on the fire small quantities of salt, which are placed in cups on the table for that purpose. He must then go to the hen-house and place an egg in the nest for the hen to sit upon. If the hen comes and does her duty, the guest is considered an auspicious person, and is fêted in that house until evening. This custom is called 'the lucky foot.'

'The Feast of the Kings' is celebrated at Epiphany, and even all through the Carnival, by boys and youths who stroll through the towns and villages performing a Scriptural play, something in the style of the 'Miracle plays' of the Middle Ages. These players, who are called *Vikliemi*, or 'Bethlehems,' personate Herod and the 'Three Kings,' or 'Wise Men,' under the names of Melchior, Balthazar, and Gaspar. Bedecked with all kinds of frippery, and crowned with gilt paper, they present an absurd travesty of the poetical old legend of the Adoration of the Magi, all the original sacred character of the custom having

disappeared in the ludicrous extravagance which now accompanies its observance. The following is a literal translation of one of the verses sung by Herod :—

I am the Emperor Herod,
 Who have mounted on horseback.
 I have taken my sword in my hand,
 And have entered into Bethlehem,
 I have cut to pieces thousands of children,
 And made the whole world to tremble !

Other bands, called *Stea*, or ‘Stars,’ make the round of the neighbourhood, carrying a great paper star with a rude representation of a cradle, and singing songs describing the apparition of the Star of Bethlehem.

Thursday and Friday are still to a certain extent, as among the ancient Romans, sacred to Jupiter and Venus. During part of the spring of every year Thursday is observed as a holiday, in order to guard against hail and stormy weather, which would damage the young crops. Tuesday and Friday are both considered unlucky days by the women. A vindictive female spirit, called the *Marz Sava*, or ‘Sprite of Tuesday Even,’ is particularly active on the former day, and must be guarded against ; and on the latter day women and girls avoid, if possible, working with sharp instruments, such as scissors or needles.

The procession of the *Perperuda*, already

described, is also an institution among the Wallach women, who, however, have their children drenched by proxy in the persons of Gipsy girls. The third Thursday after Easter is the day chosen for this propitiation of the Water Deities. Crowned with flowers, the Gipsies go from house to house, dancing and singing the invocation, and every housewife, after throwing over them a jar of water or milk, rewards their exertions with a cake, some flour, or a small coin.

The ceremony of the *Klithona*, observed by the Greeks on St. John's Eve, is also performed by the Wallach youths and maidens under the same name, but with slight differences of detail. While the articles are being taken out of the jar, little snatches of song are sung by the girls, and good or bad luck is predicted according to whether the object has been withdrawn to a gay, or to a melancholy air.

The custom called the *Craciunu*, observed on the Eve of Christmas, would seem to be, like our baking of mincepies, a survival of the Feast of the Winter Solstice. On the night of the 23rd or 24th of December, circular cakes with a hole in the centre are made in every house, and in the morning the children come round singing this Christian salutation :—

Good morrow, the advent of the feast !
Good morrow, the advent of the *Craciunu*.

Then, changing their tune, they recall the pagan character of the custom by adding these words :—

Give to me a ring-cake,
For I am dying of cold !

A relic of ancient serpent-worship would seem to survive in the consideration paid by the Wallachs to that reptile. If one of the harmless white snakes common in the country happens to enter a cottage, it is allowed to remain unmolested and supplied with food, its arrival being considered a good augury. When it has again gone forth, snake dainties are placed outside the door, and finding itself so well treated, it not unfrequently gets into the habit of paying a daily visit, when it finally comes to be welcomed as the *Serpa di Casa*, or ‘house serpent.’

In the folk-poesy of these communities, as in their folk-customs, the influence of long contact with Slavs and Hellenes is seen in the large admixture of Slav and Greek mythology with that which they have in common with the ancient Romans. Under the names of *Babu* and *Stringa* we have the malevolent Nereid of the Greeks and the *Strouga* of the Bulgarians, the *Zmok* being directly borrowed from the Slav demonology, in which he appears as an elemental demon of the same character as the Greek *Stoicheion*. He is also the jealous guardian of hidden treasures, and wily and daring

indeed is the mortal who succeeds in outwitting him. Sometimes, as in the Bulgarian folk-songs, he appears as a winged dragon and carries off young maidens into the clouds with which he is also identified. Many of the *doinas*, as the Roumanian popular ballads are termed, are purely idyllic, and full of the graceful personalizing of Nature so often found also in Greek folk-song ; while others, like those of the Greeks and Bulgarians, contain an element of rugged savagery, though here accompanied, and also in a degree modified, by the poetic grace characteristic of Roumanian folk-literature. The well-known ballad of the ' Monastery of Argis,' while illustrating the widespread custom of offering a human sacrifice at the foundation of every important building, at the same time presents us with two types of men—the ruthless and capricious tyrant Negru Voda, the *Boyard* who founded the principality of Moldavia in the thirteenth century ; and Manoli, the master-mason, the man of strong affections, who is yet prepared to sacrifice his nearest and dearest in order to fulfil the task he has undertaken.

CHAPTER IX

THE BULGARIANS—THEIR SOCIAL USAGES

THE Bulgarians not only constitute the bulk of the population of the kingdom of Bulgaria, but are found scattered in communities throughout the whole of Macedonia and Thrace, occupying in some places isolated villages, in others forming the majority of the population of a district, and constituting an important element in many provincial towns. This nationality comprises two distinct types, the Tartar and the Slavo-Greek, the former being distinguished by the high cheekbones, broad flat faces, small sunken eyes, nose flat at the top and inclined to be globular at the end, eyebrows thick and prominent, and the dark complexion usually found in members of this race, while the latter type resembles in its general characteristics the rest of the mixed Christian population of these provinces.

The habitations and mode of life of the Bulgarian townspeople differ in no way from those of the Greeks ; and, as the religious marriage law and surrounding circumstances are identical, the social status of the townswomen at least is also

the same. Foreign influence has, as yet, affected the towns of the interior in a very small degree, and the lives of the Bulgarian women of the well-to-do class are still very simple and monotonous. They take an active part in all domestic matters, do all their own needlework, and amuse themselves by promenading and paying and receiving calls on feast-days, and now and then attending a christening or a wedding. On rare occasions an evening party, or even a ball, may be given, if one can correctly so term the meeting of a number of people of both sexes who display on their persons every gradation of garment from native costume to *bona fide* evening dress in which every style that has been in vogue for the previous twenty years may, however, be recognised. The deportment and manners of the company at these gatherings usually prove to be as amusingly unsophisticated and varied as their attire, their terpsichorean performances also being often diverting in the highest degree.

Such parties are generally given on the 'name-day' of some member of the family, that is to say, the day of the Saint whose name he or she bears, and on which it is *de rigueur* for all friends to call and offer their felicitations. If dancing is not to form part of the evening's entertainment, native games of cards, vocal music, and similar diversions are substituted. Light refreshments, such as wine, lemonade and fruit sherbets, fruit and cakes, are handed round from time to time, as well



A BULGARIAN CAVASS, OR ORDERIA

as the inevitable coffee and *slatko*, or preserves, which are offered to every guest on arrival. Entertainments of this nature, even among the working-classes, usually conclude in an orderly manner, for though some of the younger men may drink to excess on the occasion of a great feast or fair, it is the exception and not the rule, and the women of all classes and creeds are most abstemious. Among the educated classes, many of whose members have either travelled abroad or visited the capital, the amusements will be directly copied from those of Western Europe, and music, conversation, and theatricals occupy the evenings, though deficiencies in dress, etiquette, and other details are often noticeable. There is very little social intercourse with Greek or other neighbours, each nationality keeping exclusively to its own circle, a practice which naturally confines the ideas of the women especially within a very narrow horizon.

The Bulgarian women of the peasant class, however, having no opportunities for copying the manners of more 'civilized' neighbours, adhere rigidly to their own national customs, and various circumstances combine to give them a much more independent position and a life of greater freedom than that led either by the Bulgarian townswomen, or by the generality of Greek peasant women. For the Bulgarian countrywomen, taking, as they do, an equal share with the men of the family in

the field and farm work, are naturally accorded a certain degree of co-equality with their husbands and brothers. Added to this, the women marry comparatively much later in life than the generality of Orientals, and—subject to the approval of their fathers—themselves select their husbands. For a Bulgarian peasant is in no hurry to get rid of the daughters who take such an active part in all that concerns the welfare of the home, and requires from the youth who would transfer the services of any one of them to himself a certain equivalent in money according to the position of the parties. But though the young husband does not always take his wife home to his father's roof, but sometimes builds a cottage for himself, he yet remains associated with his father in the farm, and is, consequently, more or less subject to the paternal rule ; and his wife will in future work for her father-in-law instead of, as formerly, for her father.

In Bulgarian folk-song we find incidents graphically recorded which illustrate every phase of social life, tragic and comic, to which the above-noted circumstances would naturally give rise. But though one sister-in-law may tyrannize over another, and a virago of a mother-in-law make the life of her son's too submissive wife a burden to her, an *esprit de corps* is occasionally manifested, and the authority of the paterfamilias made light of by the women of a household, as, for instance, in the song of 'The Three Reapers,' the eldest of

whom addresses her husband's father as 'You worn-out donkey!'¹ We also find here depicted the better side of feminine nature, the brother's wife full of helpful counsel to the maiden whose lover has been beguiled away from her ; and the matron who teaches her daughter-in-law how she may regain her husband's wandering affections. For though, as before-mentioned in the case of the Greeks, divorce is permitted by the Eastern Church, its practice gives rise to social scandal ; and when a mother has already a daughter-in-law whose character pleases her, she is naturally unwilling to exchange her for another of whose disposition she has not made proof.

The houses of the better class of peasant farmers are solidly constructed of stone, and sufficiently comfortable. The cottages of the poorer class, however, are of the most primitive style of architecture. A number of poles mark out the extent to be given to the edifice, the spaces between them being filled up with wattles of osier, plastered thickly within and without with clay and cow-dung mixed with straw. When dry, the walls are whitewashed and the dome-shaped roof is covered with tiles or thatch. The interior of an average cottage is divided into three rooms—the common living-room, the family bedroom, and the store-room. The floor is of earth, beaten hard, and is

¹ Examples of these Songs may be found in my *The Women of Turkey*, Vol. i

covered with coarse matting and thick home-made rugs. The furniture consists chiefly of cushions covered with thick woven tissues, which also serve the family as beds. On the walls are a few of the engravings in very odd perspective which, though produced in Russia, are distributed to pilgrims by the monks of Mount Athos, and there is also, perhaps, a picture of some Saint with a tiny oil lamp suspended before it. The shelves contain some articles of crockery, the brightly burnished copper cooking-pans found in the poorest house in the East, and various odd articles. The bedding, rolled up, is tidily piled in one corner, in another is the housewife's spinning-wheel, and in the inner apartment will be found the loom on which she manufactures the tissues used for the furniture of the house and the clothing of the family. Outside are sheds for the cattle, pig and sheep pens, poultry-house, the oven, and perhaps a well, all enclosed by a wall or fence, and guarded by dogs.

Like all the peasants of Turkey, the Bulgarians are most economical and even frugal in their habits. They are content with very little, and live generally on rye bread and maize porridge, or beans seasoned with vinegar and pepper, supplemented by the produce of the dairy. On great festivals a young pig or lamb is added to the usual fare, with home-made wine and a heavy kind of cake or pastry called a *banitza*.



BULGARIAN PEASANTS OF KIRETZKEUL, MACEDONIA

The clothing of the peasant women is warm and comfortable for winter wear, but must be found intolerably hot and heavy in summer. Only the sturdy frame of a Bulgarian could, I believe, easily support the weight of the full gala costume, with all the ponderous silver ornaments worn on head, neck, waist, and wrists. Indeed, I never found it possible to wear for more than half an hour at a time the costume I had obtained at Salonica with the object of using it as a fancy ball dress. All the materials of the various garments which compose the dress are home-made, and of the most durable character. The costume varies somewhat according to district ; that worn in the neighbourhood of Salonica is, I think, one of the most picturesque in style, and pleasing in colour. It consists of a gown of unbleached linen or cotton, reaching from the neck to the ankles, and decorated round the borders, and especially on the wide sleeves, with elaborate embroidery and drawn-work in linen, silk and wool. Another gown without sleeves, similarly decorated, and open at the sides, is sometimes worn over this, and, over all, a sleeveless coat of white felt, finely braided in artistic patterns and colours round the borders and seams. A sash several yards long and about two inches in width, curiously woven by hand from coloured worsted, is twisted round the waist, and the costume is completed by an apron which is sometimes entirely covered with elaborate

needlework. On the head is worn a little round skull-cap covered with gold and silk braid, from which hangs over the shoulders and below the waist an ample fringe of braided scarlet wool, or gold and black silk ; while over all is thrown a large white kerchief, embroidered round the borders with silk, and fastened to the cap with innumerable silver ornaments and strings of coins. The working dress is of the same cut, but of plainer make and more sober colour ; and two or three such costumes last a woman from her wedding-day to the day of her death. Peasant women usually go barefoot when about their daily avocations, and don their shoes and embroidered socks only on great occasions.

The frequent holidays observed by the Bulgarians as members of the Orthodox Church make it necessary for them to work doubly hard on other days in order to accomplish the year's work in twelve months. The whole family are, consequently, during the spring, summer, and winter, hard at work from sunrise to sunset, the women and girls, as soon as their household duties are finished, going out to assist the men and boys in the fields. The spinning, weaving, and other home manufactures are carried on chiefly in the winter, when the female portion of the family is less called upon for outdoor work than at other seasons.

The work of cutting the grain in autumn is

accompanied by these simple people with observances and rejoicings quite Arcadian, enlivened by the sound of the bagpipe, accompanied by song. The whole family, from the old grandparents down to the babies, picnic in the fields from morning till night, and the women work as hard as—or, according to some travellers, harder than—the men till all the corn is bound in golden sheaves. Not even the old women past field-work are idle, for, while ‘minding the babies,’ they are still busy with distaff, spindle, or knitting-needles. When the village threshing-floor is not available the earth of the hurdle-fenced enclosure before each cottage is beaten and stamped until it acquires the necessary solidity for the purpose, when the process is carried on in much the same manner as described in a previous chapter. The winnowing and sifting of the grain is done entirely by the girls, who then house it in the quaint wooden granaries which are a feature of every farmstead.

After the corn harvest comes the vintage, when the grapes are gathered in the same light-hearted fashion. Besides wine and the spirit called *raki*, or *mastica*, a kind of treacle, called *petmaiz*, is made from the juice of the grape, and stored up for winter use with the oil, grain, and other provisions. Large quantities of plums are also dried and exported, a considerable proportion of which, after passing through some mysterious process in France,

find their way into the European market as 'French plums.'

In some districts the culture of the rose-trees from the blossoms of which the famous attar of roses is made forms an important branch of industry. The flowers, which are of the species *Rosa moscata*, and have very few petals, are grown in plots or gardens of considerable extent, immense quantities being required to yield one ounce of the precious oil. Not having myself been fortunate enough to witness the picturesque scene presented at the gathering of this fragrant crop, I cannot do better than quote the following description of it by an eye-witness :—

'At dawn, a tap at my door announced that it was time to rise and witness the rose-gathering, which I had expressed a wish to see. The roses begin to be collected before sunrise, in order to keep in them all the richness of their perfume. The work requires expedition and many hands ; so large bands of young men and maidens, adding pleasure to toil, while gathering the roses, amuse themselves by carrying on flirtations and love-makings. The large garden to which I was conducted belonged to the wealthy Tchorbadji in whose house I was staying. It was at some distance from the town, and by the time we reached it the bright rays of a lovely spring morning were fast spreading over the horizon. The field was thickly planted with rose-bushes, bearing a rich

harvest of half-open dew-laden buds. The night-ingales, in flights, still hovered over them, as if disputing their possession with the light-hearted harvesters, and chorused with their rich notes the gay songs of the scattered company, who, dressed in their Prasnik (feast-day) clothes—the youths in snow-white shirts and gaudy sleeveless vests, the girls in their picturesque costume, the coloured kerchiefs on their heads floating in the breeze—had the appearance of a host of butterflies flitting over the flowers. The girls were actively employed in stripping off the buds and throwing them into the baskets slung on their left arms. The youths helped them in the task, and each was rewarded with a bud from his sweetheart, which he placed in his cap. The children ran to and fro, emptying the baskets into larger receptacles, presided over by the matrons, who sat under the shade of the trees and sorted the roses. The whole picture was so bright and happy, and in such perfect harmony with the luxuriant beauty surrounding it, that it completely fascinated me, and I felt almost envious of those happy beings—the careless, simple children of nature.¹

Bulgarian women also occupy themselves to a considerable extent in silkworm rearing, and in tending and gathering the tobacco crops ; and, when they have no land of their own to till, will hire themselves out for field and other outdoor

¹ Lady Blunt, *The People of Turkey*.

work. Half a dozen of these women labourers were employed at the Consulate at Salonica when part of the garden was being transformed into a lawn tennis court. They were all of the Tartar type, their faces tanned by sun and wind to a rich brown, and, though not one of them exceeded five feet in height, their broad and sturdy frames seemed incapable of fatigue. Great was their amusement when a naval officer, anxious for a little healthy exercise, took the spade from one of them and worked with a will for half an hour—that any one should work for amusement was past their comprehension! And the drawing-rooms, especially, of the Consulate, which they were shown one day, were to these simple peasant women as the apartments of an enchanted palace. They did not attempt to enter them, but stood, as if spellbound, in the corridor outside.

A small number of Bulgarian townswomen belonging to the poorer class become domestic servants, and, when once they attach themselves to a family, prove most devoted and faithful to their employers. Some friends of mine had the good fortune to possess an old servant of this description, who had lived for some thirty years in their family. This *Kyra*, or 'Dame,' Maria, as she was called, after being superannuated as cook, had been retained in the capacity of house-keeper. She was short, stout, and Tartar-faced,

with a 'wooden' countenance, and a capacity for wearing several stones weight of clothes on the hottest summer day, though, being a towns-woman, her costume consisted chiefly of skirts and jackets one over the other, and for outdoor wear a long fur-lined pelisse of dark-coloured cloth. Truly dragon-like was her watchfulness over her employers' interests, and the zeal of 'the Circumference,' as we irreverently dubbed her, led her sometimes to the length of almost refusing her mistress the key of the storeroom, for fear that she would be too generous with its contents. It was indeed her firm conviction—which she occasionally expressed—that, were it not for her stewardship, the *Madama* would, by her generosity, long ago have ruined herself. Like the generality of Eastern servants, she was clothed by her mistress, and she allowed her wages, during all these long years of service, to accumulate, and at her death bequeathed her little fortune to a young fellow-servant who had been rescued from slavery in a Turkish harem. Kyra Maria was exceedingly pious, and religiously made herself ill every Lent. Though she could, I believe, neither read nor write, she spoke Bulgarian and Turkish equally well, but her broken Greek was chiefly exercised for my benefit. Some of her expressions in this language became quite proverbial with us, as, besides being always very much to the point, they were often most laconically put. Any slight

indisposition of mine she always attributed to my disregard of her continual injunction to wear a shawl. 'Eh,' she would grunt in her curious Greek, as she came into my room with a *tisane*, 'not well, Mam'zell? Why would you not put on a shawl?'

The Bulgarian, like the Greek peasant women, have no amusement but the song and the dance. Unlike the Greeks, however, who dance only at appointed times and seasons, the Bulgarians are always ready for this innocent national pastime. The married women do not, as a rule, take part in the village dances, though occasionally one of more independent spirit will insist upon continuing this favourite pastime of her maiden days. On unimportant festivals, the girls form themselves into small parties in the immediate neighbourhood of their homes; while on great feast-days, such as Easter, St. George's Day, etc., they assemble on the village common, or in some communal orchard or vineyard. The youths join them with the piper, and the dancers form a long chain with the *horo-vodka*, or 'dance-leader,' at one extremity. This damsel commences the song, in which she is accompanied by half the performers, the other half repeating the verses after them. The song finished, the next in the line becomes in her turn the leader, and so on until all have officiated. In some places, however, the maiden endowed by nature with the best voice and the most retentive

memory retains the position of conductress ; and each village and parish is generally found to possess one or two thus specially gifted. Dancing also plays a great part in wedding rejoicings, when nuptial songs are substituted for those used on other occasions.

Another amusement in which the Bulgarians occasionally indulge is the 'bear-dance.' This dance, which is chiefly pantomimic, is performed by a man dressed in a bearskin, and led by a girl who makes him perform all kinds of pranks and buffooneries for the entertainment of the spectators. Sometimes the company join in the dance, and the performance concludes with a general chase of the bear.

The brigands of the Balkans played almost as great a rôle in the recent history of the Bulgarians prior to their emancipation from Turkish rule as did the brigands of Olympus and Pindus in the struggle for Greek independence. The wives of the *haidouts* often, it would seem, accompanied their husbands to the mountains in men's attire, fared like the rest of the outlaws, and often also shared their fate. Love of adventure, however, seems also occasionally to have led numerous young women to adopt this calling, which is by no means in more disrepute among the Bulgarian than among the Greek peasants. After a few years, if they escaped capture or death in their encounters with the Turkish troops, the *haidout*

women returned home, married, and settled down to domestic life, like Penka in the folk-song. M. Miladinov, the Bulgarian folk-lorist, relates that he once met in his wanderings a *ci-devant* brigandess, Sirma, then a woman of eighty, who is the heroine of a song beginning:—

Say, who has ever seen a maid
Of seventy-seven the captain?

The morals of Bulgarian women would seem to be, on the whole, very good. In the towns, manners are very much the same as among the Greeks; but the peasant women, as has been already described, enjoy much greater freedom, and few restrictions are placed upon intercourse between the sexes. Even Messrs. St. Clair and Brophy, whose rabid Turcophilism would not allow them to see any good in the male Bulgar, admit that their 'morality is tolerably good for a people with whom religion has no real force,' but ascribe the superiority of morals found among this nation, as compared with the Servians and Roumanians, to the fact of their having Turkish neighbours, whose example 'shames' the Bulgars 'into morality.' Turkish peasants are, no doubt, most virtuous people; but Oriental Christians do not, as a rule, copy the manners of their Moslem neighbours in other respects. And I venture to think that the reason of this comparatively higher morality is to be found rather in national tempera-

ment and in social conditions. As among the Greeks, considerable facilities for divorce exist, but they are naturally seldom abused by people whose leading characteristics are industry, thrift, and solid good sense.

CHAPTER X

BULGARIAN FAMILY CEREMONIES

ANCIENT customs connected with domestic events are fast dying out in the towns of Free Bulgaria, where the people are with every succeeding year coming more and more into contact with Western civilization. But in the country districts, and more especially perhaps in Macedonia and Thrace, they still generally survive, and will, no doubt, long continue to be observed. The hardy peasant woman makes very light of the troubles of maternity, but the baby has at first a very hard time of it. The Bulgarian Wise-woman who unites the professions of Mrs. Gamp and village witch, or the matron who may replace her, brings into the room, as soon as the baby is born, a reaping-hook, which she places in a corner in order to keep off any malevolent beings, *Youdas*, *Strougas*, or *Vilas*, who may be lurking about. She then proceeds to bathe and salt the baby all over, and, after dressing it, lays it by the side of the mother, while she makes a kind of omelette with eggs, oil, and pepper, as a poultice for the infant's head. It appears to be a popular belief that if a child is not thus salted, its feet or

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some other part of its body will become malodorous, and the poultice is intended to solidify the skull and render it proof against sunstroke. While the baby is screaming its loudest in protest against this treatment, the nurse proceeds to fumigate the room for fear that the presence of the reaping-hook should not have all the effect desired, and the Powers of the Air be attracted by the child's cries, a clove of garlic and some of the charms before mentioned as used by the Greeks for the purpose, being fastened to the baby's cap against the Evil Eye. The mother, though she may be up and about her numerous household duties in a day or so, is not supposed to leave the precincts of her house until forty days after the birth of the child, and, consequently, like the Greek mother, is not present at its baptism, which takes place on the eighth day, and is conducted in a fashion precisely similar to that of the Greeks. On the occasion of her first going abroad, namely, when she goes to be 'churched,' she uses as a walking-stick the shovel with which the bread is put into, and withdrawn from, the oven.

The upper classes of the Bulgarians follow the customs of their Greek neighbours in matrimonial affairs, the first advance being made by the girl's parents who commission a professional match-maker—called, in Upper Macedonia, *stroinikote*,

or, if a woman, *stroinikitza*; and, in Bulgaria, *swaty*—to procure a suitable husband. Of late years, too, the custom of receiving a dowry with the wife has been gaining ground. The betrothal is a formal religious ceremony, which takes place before witnesses, when the documents containing the wedding contract are exchanged. Among the better class of townsfolk, however, native observances are being gradually laid aside, and an attempt is made to conform to European usages. The bride's trousseau is ordered from Vienna, as are also the wedding-dress, wreath, and veil, which it is customary for the bridegroom to present to her. The fond mother, too, generally adds to her daughter's 'tocher' a number of articles for household use of home or native manufacture, such as embroidered towels, bed- and table-linen, and various charming fabrics woven of rich raw and floss silk, or silk and linen.

But with the Bulgarians as with the Greeks, old customs must be sought for among the peasantry, and the observances connected with marriage are not the least curious and interesting. A young peasant cannot marry until his parents, for whom he has hitherto laboured, can afford to give him a sum of money sufficient to buy a wife. The price ranges from £50 to £300, according to the position of the contracting parties, and is settled by the *svatobi*, or proxies, while another and smaller sum, designated by the Turkish term

bash parasi, or 'head-money,' is paid to the mother. The *gody*, or betrothal, then takes place, a Wednesday or Thursday evening being considered the most auspicious time for the ceremony, which consists of the exchange of documents certifying, on the one hand, the sum of money to be paid by the bridegroom, and, on the other, the quantity and quality of the trousseau, or rather 'plenishing,' promised by the maiden's parents. Rings are also interchanged by the couple after being blessed by the priest, who acts the part of notary on such occasions. After the recital of a prayer by the priest, the maiden kisses the hands of the assembled company and then retires with her friends to feast apart, unawed by the presence of the elders, for whom a table is spread in the principal room. The word table is, however, a misnomer, for such articles of furniture are found only in the dwellings of the wealthier farmers, and the cloth is generally spread on the floor, or perhaps for the elder and more distinguished guests on the low, broad tray-stools used also by the Turks. The young people afterwards dance outside the house, and sing songs at intervals. The affianced youth then produces his presents, which consist of various articles of feminine apparel, including several pairs of native shoes, a head-dress and necklace of gold and silver coins, a silver belt, bracelets, ear-rings, and other ornaments. The value of these gifts is freely criticized

by the girl's father, and a certain amount of chaffering may ensue, the suitor adding to the necklace or head-dress coin after coin until the goodman is content. All these various treasures are then bestowed in the *tekneh*, the wooden trough which serves equally for kneading the bread and cradling the little ones, and the festivities are resumed. On the following day the young woman proudly dons all this finery, and parades herself in the village as 'engaged.'

Many Bulgarian marriages are, no doubt, love matches ; though more practical considerations often influence Petko and Yanko in the choice of their helpmates. And a helpmate in every sense of the word a Bulgarian peasant's wife must be ; for, as already described, a very large share of the labour of the farm devolves upon her, until the children grow up to take part in it. Petko, therefore, will probably choose his wife, as he would a team of oxen, for her muscular strength and probable working powers, the more so as, like his oxen and buffaloes, he must purchase her with a considerable sum of money ; and, consequently, the most physically powerful wife is considered the best investment.

The marriage does not take place until at least six months after the *gody*, and is sometimes deferred for years by selfish parents who wish to retain the services of their daughter as long as possible. Sometimes, indeed, the couple find it

necessary to take matters into their own hands, and elope to the *papas* of some neighbouring village, who unites them in holy matrimony. Some sympathetic married relative or friend will then hide the runaway in her own house until the wrath of her father is somewhat appeased, and he consents to receive her back and give the indispensable wedding feast. The bridegroom in the meantime builds himself a house, and furnishes it according to Bulgarian ideas of what is fitting. Certain domestic animals will also be purchased—a pair of oxen or buffaloes for ploughing and draught work being considered indispensable, and a cow and sometimes poultry will be installed in the farmyard ; and when all is in readiness, the young man sends his parents or the *swaty* to announce to his future father-in-law that he wishes the wedding to take place in the course of a few weeks. The *swadba* or wedding-day decided upon, the domestic preparations begin in both homes. Weddings are generally celebrated in the season when little work is going on in the fields, in order that more time may be devoted to the festivities ; for feast-days, on which idleness is imperative, are so numerous that the peasants can ill afford to make holiday on working-days.

During the week preceding the marriage, the respective parents of the couple complete the furnishing of the new home, and, this finally accomplished to her satisfaction, the girl's mother

turns her attention to preparing her own house for the auspicious event. The walls, ceiling, and floor are cleaned and limewashed, the copper pots, pans, and dishes, and all the articles of Austrian china and glass that adorn the shelves of the better-class cottages are taken down, thoroughly washed, scrubbed, polished, and returned to their places. A store of carpets and rugs is then produced from the walnut-wood chests, to be spread on the mattress-sofas and on the floors of the rooms and verandah; and lastly, the wedding-cakes are made, the fatted calf is killed, and the wine-jars are brought up from the cellar. Some of these cakes are sent round to friends in lieu of invitation cards to request the pleasure of the recipients' company on the wedding-day, Sunday, and also, in the case of the women and girls, to view the trousseau. All the articles composing this are on Friday hung up on a cord stretched across the room for the inspection of the matrons, who freely criticize the quality of the materials and the handiwork bestowed upon the various garments in the way of embroidery, braiding, and other decorations. The maidens meanwhile assist the bride to add any finishing touches which may be necessary, or dance and sing before the door.

Two of the girls, who act as bridesmaids, come again on the following day to help the bride with her toilet. After washing her from head to foot,

they proceed to plait her hair into a multitude of minute tresses, which will not be again undone for several days at least. While this task, which takes some time, is proceeding, the village maidens arrive with offerings of sweetmeats and flowers, and at its conclusion they all sit down together—on the floor—to a vegetarian meal, after which singing and dancing are the order of the day.

On the morrow, in the early afternoon, the wedding guests arrive, the matrons with their daughters dressed in their gayest, decked with silver ornaments, and garlanded with flowers. The bride is seated in state, her face dotted with spangles, and perhaps concealed by a scarlet veil. The upper part of her elaborately embroidered costume is almost equally hidden by the quantity of silver ornaments and coins which hang over it. When picnicking one day with a party of friends at the Bulgarian village of Neokhori, a few miles from Salonica, we were fortunate enough to find a peasant bride thus on view. It happened to be a feast day, and the groups of women and girls standing about their doorways all dressed in their gaily embroidered scarlet and white costumes produced a most picturesque effect, and as we passed up the street and approached a cottage, a mere hovel of one story constructed of rough stones, round which a number of persons were gathered, we, being strangers and ‘Franks,’ were courteously invited in ‘to see the bride.’

It was, however, some minutes before our eyes became sufficiently accustomed to the gloom of the interior to be able to distinguish this much-bedizened damsel. And as soon as we had in turn saluted and sufficiently admired her, we gladly escaped from the crowded, stuffy, and windowless apartment to the fresh and sunny outer air.

The religious ceremony—which is with the Bulgarians the same as with the Greeks—may take place either in the church, or in the house of the bridegroom's father, but in either case, if both parties belong to the same village the wedding party return after the service to the house of the bride's parents. Corn, the emblem of plenty, is showered over the happy pair on their arrival, and as soon as the guests are seated the bride makes the round of the room, kissing the hands of all the matrons, from each of whom she receives in return a dried fig. The wedding feast is then held, when the male portion at least of the company apparently endeavour to rival their legendary ancestral heroes in their gastronomic feats. Singing and dancing then fill up the time for the younger members of the party until the hour has arrived for them to escort the bride to her new home.

Taking home the bride is performed in extremely picturesque fashion by the Bulgarian communities in some parts of Macedonia, especially when the home of the husband is at some distance ;

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and the ceremony has something in common with that attending the Wallach weddings already described. The bride is conducted to the gate of the homestead by her father, who assists her to mount the horse prepared for her, and the guests, also mounted, form a procession, the leader of which carries a flag surmounted by an apple. With their garlands of flowers and vine-leaves, their songs and strains of wild music, their gleeful shouts and gay laughter, this wedding procession might well be taken for an ancient chorus of Bacchanals wending their way by mountain-path and ravine to some old shrine of the vinous god. On entering the village for which they are bound, the company are met by the *Nunco*, or 'best man,' with other functionaries called respectively *Maldever* and *Stardever*, all of whom, like the Kane-phoroi in the Dionysiaka, carry baskets of fruit and cakes and flasks of wine, provided by the *Nunco*, who himself bears the bridal crowns and leads a goat with gilded horns.

On arriving at the gate of the bridegroom's dwelling, the standard-bearer enters, followed by the bride, who reins up her steed in front of the flag, now set up in the centre of the courtyard, and a couplet is sung which may be thus translated :—

O Maldever, O Stardever, why linger ye outside ?
Dismount, dismount, and enter now thy husband's house,
O Bride !

The song concluded, the bride bows three times to the company before being lifted from her horse by the bridegroom's father. After kissing her steed on the forehead, she takes hold of one corner of a handkerchief extended to her by the patriarch, and is thus led into the lower story of the house, used generally as granary and storeroom, and lighted only by narrow slits in the walls. The centre of this apartment is occupied by a wine barrel crowned with the wedding-cake, on which stands a glass of wine. The priests, in their gorgeous sacerdotal robes and tall black hats, range themselves around, holding crosses, and over this Bacchanalian altar the Christian marriage rite is performed. After having tasted the wine, the principals walk three times round the barrel, while cakes, fruits, and comfits are showered over them.

Newly married couples are required to observe a week of seclusion in their home, during which time they may neither go out nor receive visits. At the termination of this *solitude à deux*, the village matrons arrive to escort the bride to the well, fountain, or spring from which the household is accustomed to draw its supplies of water, in order that she may propitiate the water nymphs who have their abode in its depths. Bearing a couple of pails slung yoke-fashion from her shoulders, she is conducted in formal procession to the spot, and after throwing into the water her offering to

the *genii loci*—usually a coin or small silver trinket—draws up water and fills her pails, which are forthwith emptied over her ‘for luck’ by her companions. In return for this kind attention the bride now kisses hands all round receiving as she does so a fig—the emblem of plenty—from each matron. Later in the day the young wife, still similarly escorted, pays a formal visit to her mother.

Notwithstanding the similarity of the religious rite, the funeral customs of the Bulgarians differ much more from those of the Greeks than do those connected with birth and marriage. The Bulgarian views the approach of death with a fatalistic indifference almost equal to that displayed by the Moslem. Doctors are few and far between in the country districts, and if the simples prescribed by the Wise-woman do not cure the patient, it is evident that he, or she, has no longer ‘life to live.’ When the end is deemed to be nigh, the priest administers the last sacrament, and the moribund, if conscious, sets his affairs in order, the room being meanwhile crowded with female relatives, who give expression to their grief in the most demonstrative fashion. As soon as the soul has departed from the body, all the pots, pans, kettles, and vessels of every kind are turned upside down in order to prevent its taking refuge in one of them, and subsequently troubling the family. The corpse is laid upon a double mattress

between sheets, and completely dressed in its holiday costume, including shoes and stockings. A pillow of homespun linen or cotton is filled with handfuls of earth by all the persons present, and placed under the head. The head is decked with fresh flowers, an *etkon* is laid on the breast, and also a plate with flowers and candles, placed there by persons who wish the dead to carry, by these means, messages to relatives or friends who have gone before.

When all the preparations are complete, the priest arrives to read the first part of the burial service, after which the women watching round the body chant dirges until the clergy arrive on the following morning to conduct the dead to his last resting-place. An ox or buffalo cart is brought to the door, and in this primitive hearse the corpse is conveyed to the church where the funeral Mass is to be performed. At the grave a barrel of wine is broached, and boiled wheat and small loaves are distributed to all present, who, as they receive these funeral cates, ejaculate *Bogda prosti* (' God have mercy '). The gala costume is then taken off, oil and wine are sprinkled on the body, which, wrapped in a shroud, is finally replaced in the coffin, and lowered into the grave.

Returning to the house of mourning, the company wash their hands over the fire, and three days afterwards every article in the house is washed, or sprinkled with water, and exposed to

the air for the three following days, any household goods which cannot be so purified being sold or given away. On the evening following the funeral, the relatives and friends of the deceased assemble at a great Death Feast, a similar ceremony being repeated ten days later. A widow visits the grave of her husband every day for forty days after burial, and throws water on it in order that he 'may not die of thirst.' And, notwithstanding centuries of professed Christianity, so ineradicable are old pagan beliefs that, after feasting on Palm Sunday at the grave, the relatives leave there some of the food and wine, in the belief that the dead will partake of them during the night, and on Easter Monday it is customary to place a red egg on every grave. Ceremonies similar to the *kólyva* of the Greeks, and called by the Bulgarians *Pominki*, or Commemorations, are held at the grave at intervals of three years, at the end of which time the body, if found to be sufficiently decomposed, is disinterred, with the same formalities as those observed by the Greeks.

CHAPTER XI

BULGARIAN BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

THE Bulgarian Church, originally a branch of the Orthodox Greek Church, had, in the thirteenth century, thrown off the supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and continued to exist independently until 1767, when it was once more brought under the jurisdiction of that See. The Bulgarian bishops were immediately replaced by Greeks, their monks sent adrift, and the revenues of the monasteries appropriated by the new clergy, the Greek language being also substituted for the Bulgarian in the services of the Church and in the schools, with a view to extinguishing the Pan-slavist spirit and substituting for it Pan-Hellenism. Such high-handed action, though perforce submitted to for a time, was none the less resented by the Bulgarian nation ; and in 1858, a struggle for a free Church was commenced which, after being maintained for fourteen years, finally resulted in the issue of a decree by the Sublime Porte releasing the Bulgarians from the spiritual supremacy of the Greek Patriarch, and empowering them to elect a religious chief of their own.

The dogmas of the Bulgarian Church are consequently precisely similar to those of the Greek, and its fast and feast days identical.

The dogmas and precepts of Christianity are, however, things not dreamed of in the philosophy of the lower classes ; and to the Bulgarians, as to the members of the sister Church, religion is not a spiritual, but a practical matter, and consists in the superstitious observances connected with periods of penance, festivals of Saints, and the other outward forms ordained by the Church and by custom. And all these various events of the ecclesiastical year are so inextricably mixed up with fragments and relics of old pagan beliefs and customs, that the lower clergy, being as ignorant as their parishioners, cannot distinguish between *adets*, as these customary observances are called, and the religious beliefs actually professed by the National Church. The vaguest possible notions exist as to the immortality of the soul, and the life beyond the grave ; Heaven, Hell, and *Gehenna*—the purgatory of the Eastern Church—present no very distinct notions to their minds ; and though a peasant woman may describe the first as the abode of the Saints and Angels, and the second as the abode of the Demons, she will, in following the pagan custom of leaving food and drink for her departed relatives upon their tombs, deny all practical belief that their souls are either in bliss or in torture. The long connection

of the Bulgarian with the Greek Church naturally led also to the assimilation of many of its superstitious beliefs and customs, but the paganism of the Bulgarians has remained, in its leading features, distinct from that of the Greeks. It is, in fact, a survival of the pantheistic worship of the ancient Slavs, which the invading Bulgarians adopted together with the language of the conquered people among whom they settled, and it teems with wild cosmogonic myths.

The festivals of the Bulgarians are, consequently, a curious fusion of old heathen rites with superstitious Christian observances. Owing to the great number of holidays enforced by the Eastern Church, the Saints' Days which have replaced the Festivals of Nature and of the ancient heathen gods often coincide with them in date, and are simultaneously celebrated with a strange admixture of Christian and heathen ceremonies.

The year opens during the feast of the winter solstice, called by the Bulgarians *Kulada*. Like the Hallowe'en of Scotland, it is a great time among the girls for all kinds of divinatory rites respecting their future spouses, and to every line or verse of the songs sung during this festive period is added the refrain of *Hey Kulada, moy Kulada!* The elementary spirits or demons are, at this season, supposed to be especially alert and powerful against mankind, and the Bulgarians, in common with their Christian and

Moslem neighbours, consider it necessary to take every precaution against the malevolence of these Powers of the Air. A log of wood is carefully left in every cart, and some water in every pitcher, in order to prevent any demon's taking possession of them, and by his baneful presence rendering them too heavy to draw, or lift.

On the feast of St. Demetrios, these supernatural beings threaten the domestic animals, and are exorcised by the placing of lighted tapers in the stables and cattle-sheds, and in the place where firewood is chopped.

The 13th of January is called the *Baboudien*, or 'Matron's Day,' when the married women celebrate a kind of saturnalia, and, according to some accounts, indulge pretty freely in wine on the occasion.

Lent is most rigorously observed by the Bulgarians, who pursue their usual avocations on a meagre diet of bread, onions, garlic, and vegetable soup. The first day of the second week of this period of penance is observed as the Day of the Dead, or All Souls' Day, when the women go from house to house carrying lighted candles.

The month of March, called by the Bulgarians *Baba Mart*, or 'Mother March,' is the only 'female' month of the year, and during this period the women are allowed to assert a kind of temporary supremacy over their husbands, and be as idle as they choose. They accordingly, in order to

propitiate *Baba Mart*, abstain from washing, weaving, and spinning, and even from 'pipe-claying' the floors of their houses, a task usually performed once a week ; for, were they to perform any of these domestic duties, the goddess would give no rain during the rest of the year, but send instead lightning to destroy the house and the crops. The 25th day of March, on which the 'Mother' is specially honoured, is called the *Blagostina*, and its observance and that of St. Constantine's Day, with which it coincides, are curiously mixed up. It is most probably a survival of the feast of the Vernal Equinox.

Though this festival occurs during Lent, when both fish and oil are forbidden by the Greek Church, the Bulgarians partake of both ; and they explain the exception in favour of the former by the following well-known legend, in which the titular saint seems to be curiously confounded with Constantine Palæologos. According to the Bulgarian version of the story, the Byzantine Emperor was, on the last day of the siege of Constantinople, frying fish in his palace, in front of which was a pond, when terrified messengers came to announce that the Turks were mounting the breach, and that the city would soon be taken. The Emperor refused to admit the possibility of such an event. 'The Turks,' said he, 'will no more take the city than these fried fish will jump into the pond !' As he spoke, the fish leapt from

the pan into the water, all cooked as they were, and have swum in the pond ever since. Why this should entitle the Bulgarians to an 'indulgence' on this day is, however, not very clear. But, according to the peasants, the *Blagostina* is a great festival and holiday for all creation, and on it even the swallows and bees abstain from labour in the celebration of the re-birth of Nature. It is also the Feast of Serpents, which now come out of their holes, and are sure to bite during the coming year any who profane their festal day with manual toil. In the evening three large bonfires are lighted in every village. Round one dance the young people, the matrons form a circle round the second, while round the third the men gather for their potations; and all three parties enliven their proceedings with song.

On St. George's Day, the Bulgarians make a sacrifice of lambs, and relate as their reason for this practice the following curious legend, which seems to be of Moslem origin, and is evidently a compound of the story of Abraham's sacrifice and a legend concerning a Dervish Saint named Sari Saltik.

One day the Almighty entered the house of a very poor man, and asked for some food. The man had neither lamb nor kid to set before him, but, in order to fulfil the sacred duty of hospitality, he took his little son, cut his throat, and put him into the oven. Presently

the Lord, being hungry, asked if the food was cooked.

‘It will soon be ready,’ replied the host.

‘Open the door of the oven, and see if it be not now ready.’

The father opened the oven, and saw with astonishment that his son, instead of being roasted, was comfortably seated, and engaged in writing upon his knee in the Turkish fashion. The Almighty then commanded him in future to sacrifice a lamb on the anniversary of that day.

A Bulgarian folk-song, on the other hand, which is sung on St. George’s Day, refers to Abraham by name. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to procure this song, save in a fragmentary form.

St. John’s Eve is observed in Bulgaria with the customary bonfires and other nocturnal commemorations of that universal solar festival.

On the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, sacrifices of lambs and kids are made, accompanied with offerings of wine, honey, cakes, etc., to one of the Saints. The Saint who is to be thus honoured is chosen by lot. Candles are lighted in front of three *eikons*, and the candle first touched by a little child brought in for the purpose decides which Saint is to preside at the festival. Wine is then served and each person present as he drinks cries, addressing the chosen *eikon*—‘*Sphete* (Saint)

So-and-so, to thee be the offering ! ' The lambs or kids are now killed ; if honey forms part of the offering, the bees are smothered and their hives rifled ; and at eventide all the inhabitants of the village assemble to partake of the various sacrificial meats provided for the occasion.

As will have been evident from the foregoing, Bulgarian mythology presents a considerable survival of the Nature-worship which was no doubt the primitive religion of this, as of the Greek and other neighbouring races. The powers of Nature are, however, regarded in two different ways. For while animals, plants, mountains, and rivers are regarded as actuated by sentiments of sympathy with mankind, the *Youdas*, *Vilas*, and other nature-deities, who haunt the mountains, valleys, rivers, and springs are regarded for the most part as malevolently disposed, and must either be propitiated or guarded against. The direct personification of natural objects appears, however, to occupy but a small place in Bulgarian folk-fancy, and chiefly occurs with reference to the exploits of the Sun, who occasionally falls in love with a mortal maiden, and seeks to wed her. Though he is, in the Greek poems, represented as the ideal of manly beauty, he is by no means considered a desirable spouse. It would indeed appear, from popular expressions among all the Christian peoples of the East, that his glance is considered particularly pernicious to the beauty

of maidens, and—as already mentioned in connection with the Wallachs—precautions are taken against it, especially about the time of the Vernal Equinox. The expression, ‘a maiden whom the Sun has never seen,’ is also frequently met with in Greek folk-song and tale.

But besides the many imaginary beings which the Bulgarians borrowed from Slavs and Greeks in by-gone days, the country-folk terrify themselves with a host of others. Most curious among these are the demons to whose touch such maladies as ague, paralysis, or even the nightmare, are attributed ; and to exorcise them recourse is had to all kinds of spells and charms. Ghosts, however, as we understand the term, are, so far as I have been able to ascertain, non-existent, though, here and there, apparitions may be met with which partake more or less of their shadowy character.

Among the many superstitions adopted by the Bulgarians from their Turkish neighbours is the belief in buried treasure guarded by gigantic negroes or statuesque women, called *tellestims*, or ‘talismans.’ The *tellestim* is also a spirit created by the act of building or making. For, according to an Oriental belief, every object or building is possessed by such a spirit, which dies when its habitation is destroyed. The disposition of a *tellestim* also varies, it is believed, according to the character of the being whose shadow has fallen upon the foundation stone of the edifice, and a

lamb is sometimes sacrificed upon it in order that the *tellestim* may be mild and gentle in disposition. A story is told of a stingy Bulgar who, having sacrificed a kid instead of a lamb, produced a jumping *tellestim* whose antics rendering the house uninhabitable, it had to be abandoned. The *djins* which haunt ancient ruins are also no doubt analogous to the *tellestims* which came into existence at the time of their erection.

In every Bulgarian, as in every Greek village and town, there is some old woman learned in all ancient customs and ceremonies of divination, and in the worship of the Nature-deities—whether anathematized, or winked at by the parish clergy. She is also the possessor of an unlimited number of *marifets*, or charms, for all kinds of purposes, from that which will bring rain when the *papas'* prayers prove unavailing, to that which will drive away the demon of fever. This sorceress is able to cast spells which will cause the person against whom they are aimed to die the lingering death of the bewitched, or cure him of the bite he has received from a Vila of the Fountain, under the form of a cat. The Witch is, indeed, the most important person in the village. She assists the Bulgarian at his entrance into and exit from the world; is not only doctress and sorceress, but also high priestess of the pagan festivals above described; and, while forming the complement of the *papas*, occasionally poaches even on his preserves.

When a Witch is had recourse to in her capacity of doctress, she first proceeds to ascertain the gravity of the disease, its nature being apparently of little importance. Producing a scarf or girdle several yards long in which a knot has been tied, she, after some preliminary words of incantation, proceeds to measure it on the patient's arm, from the elbow to the finger-tip. If the knot falls on the hand, the malady is but slight, or merely imaginary ; if midway, it is serious ; but if on, or near the elbow, it will prove fatal. As the Wise-woman has probably acquired, from long experience, a certain practical knowledge of diseases, she no doubt occasionally succeeds in correctly diagnosing the case, and her wide acquaintance with the use of simples often enables her to prescribe an effectual remedy, the real efficacy of which is disguised under some accompanying incantation or other form of deception. For a Spay-wife is naturally not disposed to be communicative on the subject of her pharmacopœia ; and, as she and her patients invariably attribute the malady to spells, or demons, she attributes its cure to the magical practices resorted to for its removal.

While many of the antidotes used by the Bulgarians against the Evil Eye are similar to those used by their Christian and Moslem neighbours, the following are, I believe, peculiar to this nation. ' Take six grains of salt, place them on

the eyes of the afflicted person, and then cast them into the fire with a malediction against the person suspected of having caused the evil.' 'Take three pieces of red-hot charcoal, place them in a green dish, and pour water over them with one hand while making over them with the other the sign of the Cross. Drink some of the water, wash your hands with the rest, and then throw it on the ground outside the house.'

Among the other folk observances and beliefs affecting everyday life are the numerous *adets*, or customs, non-compliance with which is considered unlucky, or even sinful. These would form a very long list, but the following may serve as specimens: It is unlucky to give a child a spoon to play with; to give away or sell a loaf without first breaking off a piece; to bathe a child under seven years of age; to sell a sack of flour without first making a loaf from it; to clean a stable, sell milk, or fetch water after dusk, etc. etc. Flour must be fumigated with incense when it is brought from the mill—more especially if the miller be a Turk—in order to drive away any demon which may have entered into the sack; and before bringing into the house water from the fountain a small quantity from each jar or pail must be spilt on the ground, as some elementary spirit might otherwise be floating on the surface, and, not being thus thrown out, take up his abode in the house, or enter into the body of a person

drinking the water. It is also a sin to give alms to a Gipsy, Jew, or other 'infidel,' or to allow a dog to sleep on the roof of a house, as this is calculated to disturb the repose of deceased members of the family !

CHAPTER XII

THE OSMANLIS—THEIR HOMES AND HAREMS

A PREDOMINATING instinct of the Osmanli Turks has ever been a passion for the picturesque in nature, a love of splendid sites, sparkling seas, leafy shades, cool fountains, and wide horizons ; and this instinct has led them, wherever they have settled, to choose for their abodes the most charming situations, commanding views unrivalled in grandeur and beauty.

The streets of a Turkish quarter are consequently, owing to their elevated situation, often steep, and also for the most part winding and narrow, and the pavement, if any there be, is of cobblestones sloping towards a gutter in the centre of the roadway, which is usually ankle deep in dust in dry weather, and a rushing torrent after rain. In other respects, however, the streets are, generally speaking, cleaner than those of the Christian and Jewish *mahalláhs*, partly owing to the natural drainage consequent on their elevated situation, partly to the greater space available in their courtyards and gardens for the bestowal of refuse, and also largely due to the presence in their streets

of the pariah dogs who act as scavengers, and, though considered unclean animals and not admitted to the houses of Moslems, are protected and treated with kindness by them.¹ Kindness to animals, I may here remark, is a leading trait in Turkish character; and one may often see in the streets, sheltered under a house wall, rude little temporary shelters constructed of boards and carpeted with straw for the accommodation of a canine mother and her brood of delightful woolly pups, who speedily become the pets and protégés of the whole *mahallâh*.

Almost every Turkish dwelling, palatial or lowly, has its enclosed courtyard, and often a garden with overshadowing mulberry, acacia, cypress, and plane tree. Each house, too, is completely detached, so that a considerable space of ground may be occupied, even within city walls, by a somewhat sparse population. The houses of rich and poor alike are chiefly wooden or half-timbered constructions, and to this fact are mainly due the disastrous conflagrations that have from time to time devastated the cities of the Ægean. Latticed blinds of unpainted wood invariably cover the lower half of the streetward windows of the *haremlîk*, as the women's apartments are

¹ This once familiar feature of the streets of a Turkish town is now—in Constantinople at least—a thing of the past, the street dogs having some years ago been exiled in their thousands by the reforming zeal of the 'Young Turkey' party.

termed, thus distinguishing Moslem abodes from those of their Christian neighbours. A middle-class Turkish dwelling is generally surrounded on three sides by garden and courtyard, the fourth abutting on the street over which the upper story projects a couple of feet or so. The plastered walls are coloured a deep ochre or terra-cotta, which contrasts warmly and pleasantly with the unpainted woodwork of the window-sashes and lattices. Within the high, tile-topped walls of the courtyard, vines and creepers clothe the supports of the outside staircase and landing leading to the living-rooms above, and in the garden beyond bloom in a luxuriant confusion little troubled by the unmethodic mind of an Oriental gardener, the rose and jasmine, tuberoses and carnations, orange and pomegranate, side by side with the leek, brinjal, tomato, and egg-plant, melon, cabbage, and parsley.

Turkish *konaks*, and *yahlis*, as the mansions and villas of families of position are respectively termed, vary, however, considerably according to the taste, wealth, and rank of their owners; according to whether situated in, or near the capital, or in the provinces; and also to the date of their construction. Those which are at all of ancient date are, in common with the humbler abodes above described, built entirely of wood, with the exception of the marble pillars of the façade, which have probably been appropriated

from the ruins of some ancient edifice. Many of these old Osmanli homes on the shores of the winding Bosphorus, with their projecting upper stories and irregular outlines, their elegant kiosks and terraces, bright colouring and verdant setting, are most picturesque in appearance. The lattices of unpainted wood screening the windows of the *haremlik* are constructed with circular openings through which the *hanums*, themselves unseen, may gaze from their cushioned divans on the ever-changing scene below—*kaiks*, steamers, and sailing craft of all nations, borne on the rapid current flowing between the Euxine and the Sea of Marmora. In many cases a towing-path only a few yards wide separates the houses from this wonderful waterway, and is here and there raised, bridgewise, to form a watergate through which the *kaiks* have access to a staircase in the basement of the house.

Generally speaking, however, a Turkish mansion, whether situated in the capital or in the provinces, is an irregularly built, rambling edifice of two stories, divided internally into two establishments—the *haremlik* and the *selamlık*. The former and larger division contains the private apartments of the family, and in the latter are the rooms used by its male members for the transaction of business, for formal receptions, and for the exercise of general hospitality. An apartment termed the *mabeyn*—an Arabic word

signifying 'a space between two objects'—serves to connect the two divisions of the mansion, the keys of the communicating doors being naturally kept by the master ; but a kind of buttery-hatch in the form of a revolving cupboard, called the *dulap*, serves for all verbal communication between the two departments, and also for the transmission of provisions into, and of dishes from, the *haremlik* kitchen when a meal has to be served in the *selamlık*. When, however, a man cook is employed, the kitchen will be in the *selamlık* and only the cakes and sweets be prepared by the harem folk. The *haremlik* has its entrance through a separate courtyard, or garden, the front door opening into a large hall which gives access to rooms on each side, and occupies the whole depth of the building. One of these rooms is the *kahveh odjak*, or 'coffee hearth,' where an old woman may always be found presiding over a wide, low charcoal brazier, ready to prepare at a moment's notice the fragrant beverage so beloved of Orientals ; the others being used as laundries, storerooms and sleeping apartments for the inferior slaves. The kitchen, which is very spacious, is usually an outbuilding. One side of it is occupied by the great arched cooking stove, with its rows of little grates, on which the contents of the brightly burnished copper pans simmer over charcoal fires, fanned with a turkey's wing by the negress cook.

A wide, uncarpeted, but well-scrubbed staircase leads from the entrance hall to the upper floor, the centre of which is generally occupied by a spacious ante-room, on which all the other rooms open. In some of the older houses the *divan-khané*, or state reception-room, contains at one end a recess, the floor of which is raised, dais-wise, a foot or more above the level of the rest of the apartment. A low divan furnishes its three sides, and in the most comfortable corner, which is the habitual seat of the house-mistress, is a pile of flat rectangular cushions, and here may also be found her circular silver hand-mirror and inlaid jewel-box. If the *divan-khané* has not such a recess, one end and half the two adjoining sides are usually occupied by a continuous sofa, the fourth wall being furnished with a marble-topped 'console' table surmounted by a mirror and candelabra, and flanked on either side by shelves of inlaid walnut wood fitted into niches on which stand porcelain or silver rose-water sprinklers, crystal sherbet goblets, and other objects both useful and ornamental. A few common Austrian chairs stand stiffly against the wall in every space left vacant, one or two inlaid walnut-wood tray-stools being placed here and there near the divan to hold cigarette-boxes, ash-trays, and other trifles. The walls are usually whitewashed, those of the principal rooms having, perhaps, a frieze painted in distemper, with designs of foliage and animals,

representations of the human form being forbidden by the Koran. The ceilings, which are uniformly of wood, are often ornamented with arabesque work in intricate and delicate patterns.

Bedsteads are not used by the Turks, save in the homes of wealthy and advanced families. The bedding, which consists chiefly of mattresses and quilts, is stowed away by day in large wall-cupboards, and the couches are spread at night on the divans or on the carpeted floor of each room. Such bedroom furniture as washstands, dressing-tables, and wardrobes are dispensed with in old-fashioned dwellings. Turks prefer to wash in running water, and every *haremlik* is furnished with a small washing-room with a hole in the marble floor to carry off the waste. Should the *hanum* desire to wash her hands and face only, a slave brings to her a brass jug and basin, and pours the water from the former over her hands ; and for ablutions on a larger scale she will resort either to the public baths or to her private *hammam*, the small Turkish bath which constitutes an indispensable adjunct of a Moslem house of any importance. Bathing accommodation of some kind may, indeed, be found in the most modest dwelling, even if but a tiny cabinet furnished with a drain for carrying off the water after use. The ladies of the family 'do their hair,' or have it done for them by their slave-maids, as they sit cross-legged on the divan ; and as to their 'frocks

and frills,' the old carved and inlaid walnut-wood chests and coffers in the treasure-room suffice to store their gauzes and brocades, silks and embroideries. Here, also, may often be found priceless treasures in metal, porcelain, glass, and gems, which, were they displayed in the reception-rooms, would greatly add to their cheerfulness. Such, however, save in dwellings into which European ideas and customs have penetrated, is not the practice of the Osmanlis.

Though open fireplaces are not unknown, the warming apparatus most commonly used, especially in the provinces, is the *mangal*, a wide, shallow brass or copper pan containing charcoal embedded in wood ashes. This is placed on an octagonal or circular stand of wrought metal or polished wood, from two to three feet in diameter and a few inches high, which occupies the centre of the room.

From the description above given of Osmanli homes it will, however, I trust, be sufficiently evident that a *harem*—or rather *haremlik*—far from meriting the epithets of a 'detestable prison' and 'place of degradation,' often applied to such abodes by superficial travellers, is, as a rule, the most cheerful and commodious division of a house. For the term *harem* (in Arabic *haram*) simply means 'a sacred enclosure,' the same term being applied to the sanctuaries of Islam. The *haremlik* is consequently the *sanctum sanctorum*, the place

safe from all intrusion, into which even the husband refrains from entering if the presence of one or more pairs of overshoes at the door of the *divan-khané* announces that his wife has guests whom he knows to be divested, according to custom, of their outdoor garments. And I will now attempt to give some account of the daily life led by the denizens of these, to many, mysterious abodes.

As with Oriental nations generally, the mother occupies the most honourable position among a man's female relatives. Osmanli women are most indulgent mothers, especially to their sons, who naturally in early youth take advantage of their devotion. Arrived, however, at years of discretion, a young Osmanli, realizing the Prophet's symbolical saying that 'Paradise is under the feet of the mother,' becomes in his turn her devoted slave. Debarred by custom from intercourse with all women not closely connected with him by ties of blood, a man's mother and grandmother, sisters and aunts, are consequently his only female friends; and to this fact may, no doubt, be traced the strong affection which exists between mother and son, brother and sister. The harem has, indeed, been termed, and perhaps not without truth, 'the sanctuary of family happiness.' For the wife and daughters, having no outside interests, use their utmost efforts to make home pleasant to their male relatives.

The relations subsisting between the various members of an Osmanli household, and the deference from younger people towards their seniors required by custom, may appear somewhat curious to Europeans. They are, however, the necessary outcome of the patriarchal system which has obtained among all the Balkan nationalities, and has only of recent years been to a certain extent abandoned by the Christian element in the seaboard towns of the Ægean. According to the customary laws of this ancient social system, if a man's widowed mother reside permanently under his roof, which is not unusual, his wife's position in the house is but secondary, and she is required to defer to her mother-in-law in all things. Hand-kissing being the usual mode of respectful greeting, the wife kisses the hand of her *kain validé*, as also that of her husband, on the occasion of any family event, or any anniversary, and also on special Moslem holidays, such as the opening of the Bairam festival. The wife may not seat herself at table before her husband's mother has taken her place, nor be the first to help herself to the dishes, nor may she smoke a cigarette in the presence of 'the first lady' until invited by her to do so. It no doubt often happens that a good deal of friction exists between two women occupying these relative positions. But the prescribed etiquette is none the less observed, and the young *hanum* probably consoles herself

with the reflection that at some future date their observance will be to her own advantage. In all matters of etiquette indeed, whether family or social, precedence depends on seniority. If, for example, a married Turk has a sister residing in his harem, she will, if the elder, enjoy precedence over his wife ; and similarly if he has three children, the eldest and the youngest being boys and the second a girl, the girl must defer to her elder brother, while the younger boy, spoilt and indulged though he may be, must give way to his sister in everything that affects their common interests. Nor do the youthful members of a family presume to sit cross-legged before their elders. In the *selamlık*, too, similar etiquette is required of boys in their intercourse with male relatives ; and in the presence of guests they speak only when specially addressed.

According to Islamic law, the care and maintenance of indigent parents, and especially of mothers and grandmothers, is incumbent on Moslems ; and it would, I venture to think, be difficult to find among the labouring classes of Moslem lands a parallel to cases of not uncommon occurrence in England, in which the progenitor of a family numbering perhaps from fifty to a hundred souls, is dependent for his or her subsistence on public or private charity.

As above remarked, the only persons of the male sex besides the husband who are permitted to

enter the *haremlık* are his father, his sons, his wife's father, and her brothers. In the large cities, however, some members of the 'advanced' class of society also admit their own brothers and, possibly, even more distant relations ; while a few may introduce to their wives and daughters, in addition to the above, their more intimate male friends. But in households belonging to the old *régime*, which constitute the bulk of the population, no male relation of the master is allowed access to the harem after attaining puberty if outside the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, a restriction which inexorably and eternally separates first cousins of different sexes, however close their childish intimacy may have been—unless, of course, a marriage between them should subsequently be arranged. An Osmanli, it may here be remarked, never, under any circumstances, goes abroad in company with his harem, though little girls, before adopting the *yashmak*, may constantly be seen in public with their fathers, and are allowed free access to the *selamlık*. But the veil once donned, a girl enters the ranks of womanhood, and is thenceforward subjected to all the restrictions of the harem. And the reason of this separation of the sexes out of doors is sufficiently obvious. For a father or brother could not frequent the public promenades in company with the female members of his family without bringing them directly under the notice of his friends and acquaintances, and

thus infringing the fundamental principle of the harem.

The Law, social, rather than religious, which lies at the root of the harem system enjoins that no free woman or girl over twelve years of age must appear unveiled before a man who is outside the prohibited degrees of relationship. As among the Osmanlis first cousins may marry, the circle of male relatives possessing the privilege of access to a harem is thus strictly limited to the father and grandfather, the brothers and uncles of its female inmates. Inseparable, therefore, from the harem system is the institution of domestic slavery, for to slave women, who are the absolute property of their owners, the above restrictions do not apply. The demand for slaves for the service of Turkish households is practically perennial, seeing that, instead of forming a permanent class or caste in the country, the vast majority of those who have entered it as bondmen and women obtain, in a few years, their freedom.

In former centuries the slaves, both male and female, brought into the Turkish slave-market were drawn from a great variety of races and nationalities, European and Asiatic ; but at the present day the white slaves are brought chiefly from Circassia, the rest being Yezidis from Kurdistan, or Georgians—though, since the occupation by Russia of that former happy hunting-ground of the slave-dealer, this traffic has only

been carried on clandestinely. The traffic in white male slaves has of late years become comparatively insignificant, free men, both Moslem and Christian, being now employed in the service of the *selamlık* in the capacities of cook, pipe-bearer, coffee-maker, and body-servant, as well as in the stables as coachmen and grooms. A considerable number of negroes, as also of Abyssinians and other Africans of both sexes, are, however, still annually smuggled into the country.

Slavery, however, as now practised in Turkey, is in direct contravention of the law of Islam, which only recognizes as legitimate property non-Moslems who have fallen as spoils of war into the power of the True Believers. For, though young girls belonging to various Asiatic races are frequently kidnapped by the slave-dealers, the great majority of the slaves brought in recent years to Turkey are drawn from the Circassian race, who profess the creed of Islam, and their purchase and sale are, consequently, illegal acts which the Sheikh-ul-Islam himself would have some difficulty in justifying. Purchasers, however, get over this difficulty by asking no questions as to the provenance of the girls and children offered for sale by the dealers, and absolve their consciences with the convenient formula, 'Theirs be the sin.' The public slave-market at Constantinople was, in deference to European opinion, abolished about the middle of last century, and though the

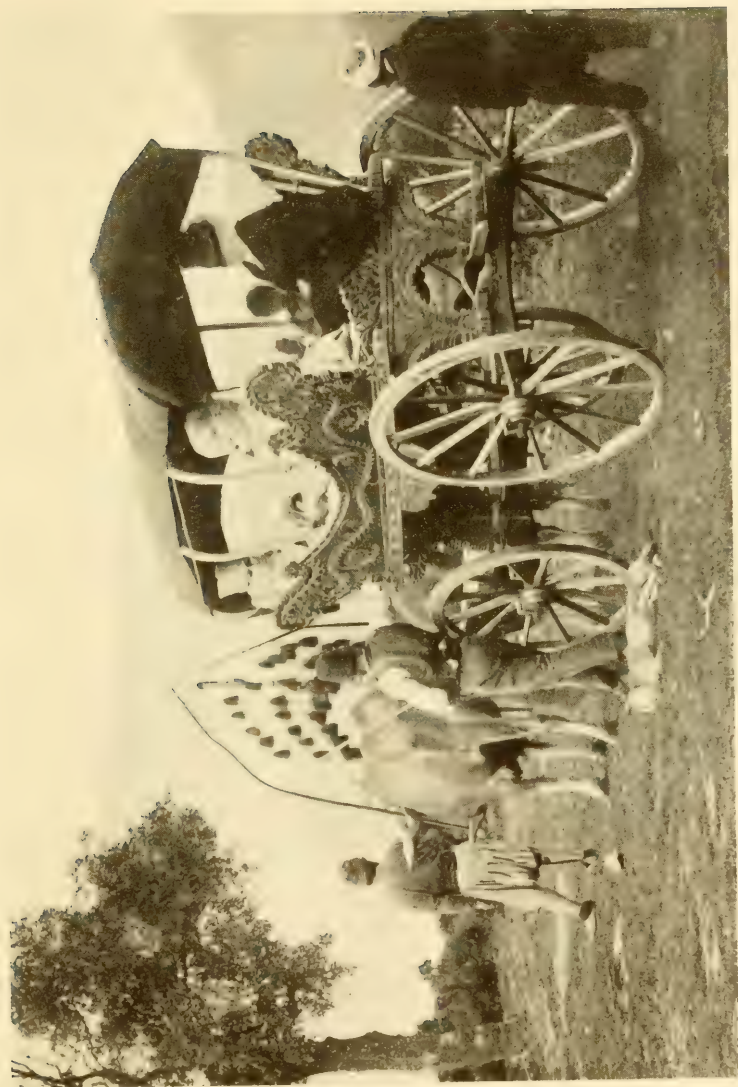
demand for female slaves at least remained undiminished, the supply has of late years become more and more limited, with the result that wealthy Osmanli families are at the present day glad to engage Greek and other European maids for the service of the *haremlik*.

After the abolition of the slave-market, private trade in slaves became much more general than formerly, this traffic being often carried on by ladies of high rank, themselves in many cases emancipated slaves. On being informed of the arrival in the capital of a fresh batch of girls, these ladies either drive to the slave-dealer's establishment, or have the human chattels brought to their *konaks* for inspection. Children of from six to ten years of age are most sought after, considerable sums being paid for promising specimens in the expectation of realizing a large profit when the girls are grown up. The selection made, and the bargain concluded, the girl is taken to her new home and placed under the care of a *kalfa*, or head servant, who carefully trains her for the position she will probably be called upon to occupy. Should she be endowed with personal charms, this may be that of *odalisk*, or even wife, of some grandee, or she may be presented to the Sultan by her mistress, or sold for that purpose to some other person anxious to acquire Palace influence. Many of these amateur slave-dealers are the wives of Ministers and other State or Palace functionaries,

who vie with each other in having the most beautiful and expensively dressed girls in their harems. For a lady with slaves to dispose of naturally dresses them well and otherwise makes the most of their personal charms to attract customers.

When the mistress and her daughters go out walking, driving, or shopping, calling, picnicking, or to the public baths, a number of slaves invariably share the treat. And it is no doubt greatly owing to this custom of including some of the slaves of the household in every pleasure party, or outdoor excursion, that misconceptions have arisen in the minds of foreigners as to the general practice of polygamy. A carriage or carriages filled with smartly dressed Turkish *hanums*—or what appear to the experienced eye as such—are by the tourist put down as the wives or *odalisks* of one Pasha, while, as a matter of fact, they are his wife's private property, over whom he, consequently, has no rights whatever. I remember, indeed, in the early days of my residence in Turkey being myself considerably puzzled as to the status of the half-dozen or so richly dressed young women who arrived with a Pasha's lady to pay an afternoon call—or rather a three hours' visitation—and who, on arriving, divested themselves, according to custom, of their outdoor cloaks and veils.

Domestic slavery, accordingly, as practised in Moslem Turkey, it need hardly be said, differs widely from the same institution as it existed



OSMANLI LADIES GOING TO A PICNIC

until recently in Christian America. In Islam, slaves are protected by humane laws ; they are, on the whole, treated quite paternally ; and not being looked down upon as a class apart, are speedily absorbed into the free and native population. Food of an inferior quality is not deemed by Moslems ' good enough for servants ' ; but, according to the command of the Prophet, a slave fares as well as her owners. Whatever her faults and shortcomings, she may not be sent adrift into the wide world, her owner being responsible for her maintenance. And at the end of seven years' servitude she can claim her liberty, and generally obtains with it a trousseau and a husband.

Female slaves have, consequently, on the whole, little to complain of. The good fortune of those gifted with personal attractions is assured from the outset, as many Turks prefer, for various reasons, to marry women who have been brought up as slaves. For marriage with a free woman—as will be seen in a subsequent chapter—is an expensive matter for a young bridegroom and his parents, owing to the lavish outlay in presents and entertainments obligatory on such occasions. Consequently, if a father cannot afford to marry his son to a maiden of his own social standing, he purchases for him a slave girl who has been brought up in some great lady's harem, and no expense is incurred beyond the purchase-money. A slave, having no position of her own, is also more likely

to be submissive and obedient to, and anxious to please her lord and master ; she has no troublesome pretensions or caprices, and no interfering relatives to take her part against him should any disagreement arise. A free woman, on the other hand, is by no means always disposed to have, according to her own expression, 'neither mouth nor tongue,' but is fully aware of her rights, and capable of asserting them ; and the moral support afforded by her family gives her an assurance which her husband often finds extremely inconvenient. Should a slave bear a child to her master, she cannot be resold, but has the right to bring up under its father's roof her offspring, which is considered legitimate, and may inherit the family property in equal shares with the children of a free wife, should there be any. The distinctive provisions of the Moslem Social and Marriage Laws, indeed, ensure that there shall be no relations whatever between men and women—whether free women or slave women—in which the latter, from the very fact of such relations, shall not have enforceable legal rights for themselves and their children. And, in course of time, set free and married, the one-time slave assumes the social status, and is invested with all the rights and privileges of a free-born Osmanli matron.

CHAPTER XIII

OSMANLI HOME-LIFE

BY no means inconsiderable are the above-mentioned rights and privileges enjoyed by Osmanli women, and their legal status may indeed be held to compare very favourably with that of women generally in Christian Europe. For, as a daughter, an Osmanli woman is entitled, on the decease of her father, to inherit his property in common with her brothers in a proportion determined by law according to the number of his children. As a wife, she retains the uncontrolled possession both of the wealth which may have been hers before marriage and of that which may subsequently accrue to her. She can inherit property without the intervention of trustees, and dispose of it as she pleases during her lifetime or by will. No doctrine of 'coverture' exists for her; she can sue or be sued by her husband, and plead her own cause personally in the Courts of Justice. But whether a Turkish wife be or be not an heiress, her husband is equally bound to support her and her slaves according to her rank and his means, and also 'to provide a separate apartment for his wife's habitation, to be solely and ex-

clusively appropriated by her, because this is essentially necessary to her, and is therefore her due, the same as her maintenance.'

As to the much-discussed question of the custody of children, this was settled for Moslems at the outset by Mohammed, who decreed that a son must remain with his mother so long as her care is necessary to his well-being, and a daughter until she arrives at puberty. And in the case of a child born after the separation of its parents, should the mother nurse it, the father is required to pay her for so doing, and also, if wealthy, 'to expend proportionately for the maintenance of the mother and nurse out of his plenty.' On the death of a mother the right of custody reverts to her female relatives, the child's maternal grandmother having a prior right, and after her, failing a sister of suitable age, its aunts.

A husband might appear, at first sight, to possess great privileges in the matter of divorce, for he has merely to say to his wife in a moment of anger, 'Cover thy face, thy *nekyah* is in thine hand!' and the separation is legally effected. Women are, however, on the other hand, safeguarded against a too arbitrary exercise of this prerogative by certain wise regulations which to a great extent modify, in practice, such facilities. In the first place, there is the religious restriction. 'The curse of Allah,' said the Prophet, 'rests on him who, without just cause, repudiates his

wife.' In the second place, there exists the social restriction—for parents would naturally hesitate to give their daughters to a man who had thus acted. And thirdly, a serious obstacle to a hasty divorce is offered by the *nekyah*—the settlement upon the wife of a considerable sum of money, varying naturally according to social position, payable to her in the event of such dismissal from her husband's roof. So essential, indeed, to a Moslem marriage is such a dower considered, that even were mention of it omitted from a marriage contract, the law would presume it by virtue of the contract itself. Being a civil act, consisting of a proposal on one side and an acceptance on the other, and rendered legal by the presence of two witnesses, a Moslem marriage can also be dissolved by the contracting parties by three several methods of procedure. If a couple, for instance, are not on good terms, and all the attempts at reconciliation made by their friends prove fruitless, a divorce by mutual consent is pronounced, and the woman returns to her father's house, taking with her, besides the *nekyah*, everything she brought with her, or has become possessed of since her marriage. If a man divorce his wife without her consent, she leaves his house equally well provided. And a *hanum* can, on her side, obtain release from a distasteful union, with payment of the *nekyah*, for various reasons, among which are the husband's desertion, cruelty, or

neglect to maintain her in the degree of comfort to which she is by law and custom entitled. If, however, a wife, without such adequate reason, and contrary to the desire of her husband, quit his roof and demand a divorce, she very properly obtains it only by forfeiting the *nekyah*.

Divorce being thus a simple process for a husband with money at his command for payment of the *nekyah*, a conjugal quarrel may easily end in a pronouncement of divorce, when the lady will immediately leave the abode of her irate spouse. Reflection, however, and the intervention of relatives and friends, may lead him to regret his hasty action, and a second marriage will follow the reconciliation of the parties. But this privilege has also its limitations. For after a third divorce, the parties may not again contract marriage, unless the lady has in the meantime entered into a formal legal union with another man. And great is the consternation and gossip in the harems of the neighbourhood, when it is reported that quick-tempered Achmet Bey has pronounced 'the three-fold divorce,' and his pretty but provoking wife has returned for the third time to the paternal roof. The fact, however, that the words 'May I divorce my wife if——' constitute for Moslems the most solemn and binding of oaths, is sufficient evidence of how repugnant to them is the use, and still more the abuse, of their privileges in this respect.

Notwithstanding the fact that the law of Islam allows a man to marry as many as four wives, and to be the owner of an unlimited number of slave women, an Osmanli household is by no means composed—as is popularly supposed in the West—of a large number of women, all of whom stand in wifely relations to their lord and master. Indeed, as a matter of fact, at the present day among Turks of the industrial classes one wife is the rule, and among those of the upper classes more than one wife is the exception. And thus it has, apparently, always more or less been among Moslems generally. For in addition to the numerous other considerations which render a plurality of wives undesirable, there is the very serious obstacle of expense. A second wife means an extra apartment, or suite of apartments, an extra slave, or train of slaves, according to her rank in life—for each wife must have her own special attendants—and an extra allowance of pin-money, as a Turkish bride rarely brings a dowry to her husband. There is, besides, no great superabundance of women in the country, notwithstanding the continual influx of slaves, and every mother of a marriageable girl naturally prefers to see her daughter become a *bash kadin*, or ‘chief wife,’ as she thus would take rank before successive wives. Lack of progeny by the first spouse is most frequently the reason of a Turk’s incurring this expense together with the risk of having his domestic peace disturbed by taking a second.

He may, of course, if so disposed, divorce the first wife ; but, as above remarked, divorce for such a reason alone would not only entail social odium, but he would in that case be obliged to pay to the discarded wife the sum stipulated in the marriage contract. Two wives, indeed, seem to be the extreme limit nowadays ; and only once during my long residence in different parts of the Ottoman Empire had I the opportunity of visiting a harem containing even this number.

Slaves, however, whether male or female, are by no means always compelled to wait seven years before receiving their freedom and its attendant advantages. For it being considered by Moslems a pious and meritorious act to free a slave, Osmanli men and women frequently bequeath either by will, or verbally, their liberty to the slaves of the household. A male slave thus set free becomes, so far as civil rights are concerned, the equal of his former owner, and may aspire to the highest offices of State ; while his wife, whatever her origin, acquires the status of *hanum*. In former centuries, indeed, many an officer of high rank and Minister of State has been of slave origin. It is also a very common practice for childless couples and widows to enfranchise and adopt as their heirs slave children to whom they have taken a fancy. I was some years ago in the habit of meeting a lady, a Circassian by birth, who, brought to Constantinople as a mere

infant, had herself been purchased and adopted by a lady of high rank ; and when left in middle age a childless widow, she in her turn enfranchized and adopted two little girls of her own race, whom she brought up and found husbands for.

Daily life in the harem is no doubt somewhat monotonous ; but it is quite erroneous to suppose that an Osmanli woman of the better class has no duties or occupations beyond a certain amount of servile attendance on her husband, and that she passes her days reclining on a divan, 'eating sweets and playing with her jewels.' For, having so few interests outside her home, the Osmanli *hanum* is very domesticated, and no accomplishments are so much appreciated in a marriageable maiden as proficiency in the domestic arts. Needlework especially is held in great estimation, and for many years before marriage a girl finds occupation for her leisure hours in embroidering the sheets, towels, quilts, napkins, and other articles which will later on figure in her trousseau and deck the bridal chamber. Like all Orientals, the Osmanli matron is an early riser, and after partaking of a cup of coffee and a cigarette, she is ready to wait upon her husband. She places his slippers by the side of his couch, and holds his pelisse ready ; and as soon as he is comfortably seated on the divan, after performing the first of the *namaz* or five daily prayers previously mentioned, she pours out his coffee from the little *ibrik*

in which it has been brought in by a slave, places the cup in its silver *zarf*, and hands it to him. The *hanum* also fills his *tchibouk*—should he prefer one to the more fashionable cigarette—hands him the amber mouthpiece, and then proceeds to light the fragrant finely shredded Latakia tobacco by placing on the bowl with a tiny pair of tongs an ember of glowing charcoal, remaining in attendance, seated on a cushion, while the slaves roll up the bedding and stow it away in the wall-cupboards. The children then troop in, uncombed and unwashed, in their quaint nightgear—wide trousers and quilted jackets of coloured cotton—to kiss the hand of their sire and be caressed by both parents. No nursery breakfast, however, awaits them; and they presently begin to clamour for pence with which to purchase their morning meal. The ten and twenty *para* pieces distributed, the children scamper down to the courtyard gate, near which they are almost sure to find the *simitdji*, or vendor of ring-shaped cakes covered with sesame seeds; or, if he is not in sight, they make their way to the nearest chandler's shop, where they have their choice of cheese, fruit, or *helvá*—a sweetstuff made from sesame seed and honey, as a relish to their bread. After this irregular meal all boys and girls over eight years old are tidied up and sent, escorted by a male servant from the *selamlık*, to the *mekteb*, or parish school, where the children of rich and

poor meet on a common footing. The babies meanwhile roam freely about the *haremlik* attended by the *dadi*, a slave who performs, after a fashion, the duties of nursemaid.

When the paterfamilias has completed his outdoor toilet and departed to his day's avocations, his womenkind proceed to follow their own devices for the rest of the day, a *hanum* being perfect mistress of her time, as she is of her property. She will, probably, first inspect with her negress cook the provisions for the day brought in by the *ayvas*, or purveyor—often an Armenian—and passed into the *haremlik* through the *dulap*—the revolving cupboard before mentioned. For the domestic economy of the natives of Turkey generally is of a somewhat 'hand-to-mouth' character, so far as fresh provisions are concerned ; and accounts are settled daily between the mistress and the *ayvas*, either at the *dulap*, or at the kitchen door, behind which the lady sits with a muslin kerchief thrown over her head, this transaction appearing usually to necessitate prolonged argument often conducted—on one side, at least—in language more forcible than polite, the *hanum* being by no means reticent in her expressions of disapproval. If any special culinary treat in the way of pickling, cake-making, or preserving is in the day's domestic programme, the *hanum* will remain in the kitchen to superintend or assist in the operation ; on washing and ironing days, too,

she and her daughters will take a more or less active part with the slaves in the day's work. In the capital, however, such domestic occupations are being gradually abandoned by the younger and more fashionable *hanums* and their daughters, who, emulating the pursuits of the foreign ladies with whom they now come more into contact, prefer to occupy their time in learning foreign languages and acquiring foreign accomplishments.

Paying and receiving calls, attending *dughuns*, promenading, driving, shopping, and going to the public baths are the chief outdoor amusements of the general run of Osmanli women. Before setting out with any of these objects, a wife must, however, first obtain her husband's permission. In the majority of households this is, however, but a polite formality, and leave for an expedition is granted as soon as requested. But whatever the object of the outing may be—walk, drive, or call, picnic or shopping expedition, the party will not fail to reach home again before sunset and in time to receive the men of the family on their return from their daily avocations.

Going to the bath is made by Osmanli women the occasion of great festivity and ceremony. A complete outfit of garments for each lady is carried by a slave tied up in a square *boktchá*, or bundle-wrapper—the primitive and universal portmanteau, made without of silk, and often richly embroidered—these garments being donned

after the bath, together with their possessor's most handsome jewels, for the admiration—and, perhaps, envy—of the other ladies they may meet at this favourite rendezvous. Other slaves carry, in addition to fruits and refreshments of all kinds, a variety of rugs, bath-wraps, brass basins, and the multitude of—to the uninitiated—mysterious articles considered necessary for the due performance of this important ablutionary rite. And at the *hammam* the ladies, with their children and attendants, remain for the best part of the day, eating and drinking, singing, frolicking, and gossiping in the intervals of the oft-repeated soapings, rinsings and rubbings, the applications to the hair of crushed laurel-berries, and to the nails of henna, and other toilet details too numerous, if not too difficult, to describe.

The Osmanlis indulge in but two meals a day—the *karvaltò*, which is eaten about eleven o'clock, and the *yemek*, partaken of about sunset, and varying accordingly between five o'clock in winter and eight in summer. Men whose vocations take them away from home rarely return for the early meal; and it is therefore to the *karvaltò* that ladies generally invite their friends, there being also the additional reason that Moslem women rarely go abroad after nightfall. Sometimes large luncheon parties are given, at which the most rigid etiquette is observed. The hostess leads the way to the dining-room where, in old-fashioned house-

holds, the covers are laid on *sofras*—circular tables, or rather tray stands, raised only about a foot from the floor, and accommodating at the most half a dozen persons. If the guests are numerous, there will be several *sofras*, at which they are distributed according to their rank. At a genuinely Turkish table the covers consist merely of a spoon and portion of bread. Round the raised leather pad which occupies the centre are grouped small saucers containing *hors-d'œuvres*—olives, cubes of water-melon or cucumber, radishes, anchovies, etc. As the ladies seat themselves cross-legged on the low cushions disposed around the *sofra*, slaves approach bearing water, soap, and towels. One holds the *leyen*, a basin made with a little stand in the centre to hold the ball of soap, and a ‘well’ into which the used water disappears through perforations; another pours water on the hands from an elegantly shaped brass *ibrik*; while a third tenders the embroidered towel with which to dry them. Other towels with ends embroidered in coloured silks and gold thread—the *chevrehs* of which the East has of late years been almost emptied by the demand for them in the West—are then distributed as table napkins, and the repast commences.

A tureen of soup, very thick, rich, and nourishing, is first placed on the *sofra*. With a wave of her hand, and a polite ‘*Boyournnu, Effendi!*’ the hostess invites the principal guest to dip in her spoon. If, however, all her guests are of inferior

rank to herself, she takes precedence, and the first spoonful. When the spoons have returned a few times to the tureen, it is removed and followed by a number of other dishes in succession. The *hors d'œuvres*, with various sweets and fruits, fill up the intervals between the courses until the *pilaf*—the national dish, composed chiefly of rice and butter—is placed on the *sofra*. The last dish, the *hocháf*, consists of stewed fruits cooled with ice, and served in a crystal bowl, with long-handled spoons of ivory. Water, and occasionally sherbet—the latter, however, not an effervescing drink, but made from fresh fruits—are the only beverages partaken of in the *haremlík*, and these are not placed on the table, but handed by the attendants as required. At the conclusion of the repast the *leyen* and *ibrik* are again carried round, and the party adjourn to the *divan-khané*. After a short interval, during which the ladies arrange themselves on the divan—still, however, observing the rules of precedence—a *kalfa*, or head servant, enters, bearing on a tray draped with a richly embroidered crimson napkin the coffee-pot, tiny porcelain cups, and *zarfs*, as the cupholders in gold or silver are called. She is followed by a troop of slave-girls, who advance in turn to the tray, pour out a cup of coffee, place it in the *zarf*, and present it to the guests according to their rank, which it is their duty previously to ascertain, those of equal rank being served simultaneously.

Tchtbouk-smoking has now quite gone out of fashion among Osmanli ladies, and with it, of course, the ancient elaborate ceremonial of pipe distributing and lighting. Cigarettes are now handed on a tray to each lady separately, and when she has adjusted one in her amber mouth-piece, another slave approaches with a glowing charcoal ember on a little brass dish from which to light it. When all the cigarettes are alight, the slaves retire to the lower end of the apartment, where, ranged in a line, they stand with arms crossed on their bosoms and eyes modestly cast down until their services are again required to remove the coffee-cups. In the interval they are, however, furtively taking mental notes of the dress, conversation, and manners of the guests, who—should the hostess have brought up in her harem girls for sale—on their side submit this galaxy of beauty to a critical inspection, and make their remarks on the girls individually with an outspokenness that would both astonish and amuse more reserved Europeans. Some of the *hanums* have, perhaps, been commissioned by their brothers or sons to select wives or odalisks for them during visits to the harems of friends—such transactions naturally requiring the co-operation of the ladies of the family—and may return home with a favourable description of some girl who has taken their fancy. An offer of purchase may in that case be made for the damsel to

her owner, who names her price ; and, this agreed to, the slave is transferred to her new home, probably as a *kitabettî*—that is, one sold with the stipulation that she will in due course be set free and married.

Should, however, the day's programme include none of the above-mentioned distractions, the monotony of harem life may, at any moment, be broken by various incidents—as, for instance, the arrival of a female broker with jewels, articles of dress, or home-made cosmetics and perfumes for sale, and gossip unlimited. These itinerant vendors, who are chiefly old women, are quite an institution in Moslem society, and, under the cloak of their calling, which gives them easy access to harems, they act as agents not only in affairs matrimonial, but also in clandestine intrigues of every description. In Turkish folk-literature, indeed, an 'old woman' invariably appears as the *deus ex machina* of a romance or tragedy. And should the family possess daughters of a marriageable age, the portress may at any moment announce the arrival of a party of *guerudjís*, or 'viewers'—ladies, who may be strangers to the family, in search of a wife for a son or brother—an occurrence calculated to cause lively and more or less lasting excitement in the breasts of the fair denizens of the *haremlík*. For every Turkish girl, whether handsome or 'homely,' has a right to look forward to marriage as her

destiny ; and an ' old maid ' is hardly to be found among the Osmanlis, so rarely does it happen that a husband cannot be found for a girl of marriageable age. Good looks naturally add to their owner's value in the marriage market ; but even the most unprepossessing or deformed spinster, if she belong to a family of position, need not despair, as she will at the worst be bestowed on some impecunious but aspiring youth, to the furtherance of whose ambitious schemes the patronage of her father is necessary ; and many a high official has owed his success in life to the influential connexions of an uncomely spouse.

With regard to the dress of Osmanli women, the incongruities noticeable in the furniture of the majority of the better-class houses prevail to an even greater extent in the dress of the generality of the ladies who inhabit them. Out of doors the *tchitcharf*, a disguise which has of late years been substituted for the more elegant *yashmak* and *feradjé*—the veil and cloak—is almost universally worn as full dress. This garment may perhaps be best described as a scanty double petticoat—made of a variety of materials from checked or striped printed cotton to fine cloth or rich brocaded silk—the upper one drawn hoodwise over the head, and fastened under the chin, the face being completely hidden by a small square of dark-coloured silk or muslin. But with regard to indoor dress it would be difficult to say what is, or is not, worn at the

present day by Osmanli women of the upper and wealthier classes, the majority having during the past thirty years gradually discarded their graceful and picturesque national costumes in favour of what are not infrequently ludicrous and lamentable travesties of Parisian fashions.

The ancient indoor dress of an Osmanli lady, which may still occasionally be seen in the remoter provinces, is extremely handsome. It consists of a full-sleeved gown of white silk gauze, edged with silk point-lace, and full trousers of red silk, over which is worn the *yelek*, a sort of long coat or robe, tight-fitting above the waist, and buttoned from the bosom to below the girdle, but open on each side from the hip downwards, and trailing a few inches on the floor. For full dress, an upper trailing robe, wider and looser, is worn, also open at the sides, the sleeves of both garments being rather tight-fitting, but open for some six inches at the wrists, where they are often shaped *en sabot*. This outer robe is usually of some rich material worked round the borders, or all over, with elaborate trailing patterns in coloured silks, or in gold and silver thread, to which pearls are sometimes added. The head-dress is a little round flat cap, covered with pearls and precious stones or with embroidery and gold braid. The bridal dresses of women of the middle and lower classes are still made on this model, the materials depending on the wealth of the bridegroom.

The everyday dress of women and children of the middle and lower classes generally is of brightly printed cottons, made up in winter into quilted jackets and other garments, which are worn over full trousers of the same material. Before going abroad a Turkish woman tucks up her skirts about her waist as high as possible, and secures them there with one of the large squares of muslin that serve her for so many purposes. Having thus made a shapeless bundle of herself, she throws over all her *tchitcharf*, puts on her yellow babouches and black overshoes, and sallies forth. Owing to the disposition of her primitive 'dress suspender' and heavy footwear, the gait, when in her outdoor gear, of an Osmanli woman belonging to the middle and lower classes is, as a rule, the reverse of graceful.

In concluding this brief survey of the home life and social status of Osmanli women, I may remark that the seclusion of women which accompanies the harem system is by no means, as generally assumed, a proof of their supposed 'degraded position,' but is, on the contrary, in great part the outcome of the regard entertained for them by the men of their nation. Surrounded as they have always been by people of alien races and religions, in no other way than by restricting them when at home to the inviolable *haremlık*, and by hiding their charms from the public gaze when abroad under disguising veil and cloak, could they be

shielded from the impertinent curiosity—to say the least—of the mixed horde of Christians, Moslems, and Jews who throng the streets of their cities and towns. For the same reason similar customs were formerly, and in some parts of the Empire still are, observed by the women of the Christian population, Armenian and Greek. And, as a matter of fact, the outdoor disguise of an Osmanli woman renders her perfectly safe from insult or molestation, whether on foot in the streets, in tram or train, or on the deck of the Bosphorus steamboats, and whatever the provocation she may give. Few foreigners are probably aware how important a part was played by Osmanli ladies in the preparations for the late revolution which resulted in the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid. Taking full advantage of the immunity from molestation or impertinent curiosity which is the privilege of their race, and also of the absolute anonymity conferred by their disguising veils and cloaks, the wives, mothers, and sisters of the leaders of the movement in different parts of the Empire were able to act freely as their emissaries and go-betweens, bearing from harem to harem, and from city to city, compromising papers which husbands or brothers could have carried only at the risk of their lives. Very naturally, Osmanli women of the upper classes soon after these events proceeded to demand of the new Party of Reform the removal

of some at least of the more irksome restrictions by which they considered themselves hampered ; and a certain section of the more advanced members of that party frankly declared themselves in favour of according to the women of their nation all the social and industrial freedom enjoyed by their sisters in Western Europe. Serious difficulties of all kinds were, however, soon found to stand in the way of such sweeping social reforms ; and at the present day the attitude of the Ottoman Government towards this question would appear to be the reverse of favourable.

CHAPTER XIV

OSMANLI FAMILY CEREMONIES

(I) *Birth Ceremonies*

THE Turks form no exception to the general rule above-mentioned respecting the publicity given to family events, all such domestic happenings being made the occasion of much display and large accompanying hospitality.

The anticipated arrival of an Osmanli 'little stranger' is announced to the neighbourhood by the arrival of the *Ebé Kadın*—the Turkish Wise-woman—preceded by a *hamal* bearing on his porter's saddle the emblems of her calling. As soon as a baby is born its mother is placed on a state bedstead, used only on such special occasions, which is spread with elaborately embroidered and fringed sheets of native gauze over which are thrown quilts of satin encrusted with needlework in gold and silver thread, while half a dozen long narrow silken pillows enclosed in 'slips' matching the sheets are piled at the head of the bed. Round the lady's head is bound a crimson kerchief to which is attached a bunch of charms, a gauze veil of the same hue being thrown loosely over them—the whole coiffure

being designed to keep the Peris at a distance. For although these imaginary beings are not, like the Nereids of modern Greek mythology, credited with the propensity of purloining newborn infants, their baleful influence is none the less to be carefully guarded against, and the mother and babe should never be left alone for a minute until after the bath ceremony has taken place. If, as among the poor, this is sometimes unavoidable, a broom to which a head of garlic has been tied is placed by the bedside to keep away uncanny visitors.

In the meantime the baby has been dressed. But no dainty layette, like that which awaits the arrival of a 'little stranger' in the West, has been prepared for the little Osmanli, however wealthy his parents may be. His small body is at once tightly bound in swaddling bands under a *libardé*, or gown of quilted cotton stuff; and various quilted wrappers bound one over another convert the poor mite into a shapeless bundle, its head being covered with a little cap of red silk from which hangs a tassel of seed pearls and a bunch of amulets—coral horns, turquoises, or pieces of blue glass, etc.—to ward off, besides the Peris, the 'Evil Eye,' as much dreaded by the Osmanlis as by their Christian neighbours. Its toilette completed, the baby is laid on a handsome quilt in its walnut-wood cradle, and over all is spread a large square of crimson gauze.

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When all these arrangements are complete, the happy father enters to congratulate his wife, and confer upon the baby the name by which it is henceforth to be distinguished. Carrying the infant outside the door of the natal chamber, its sire repeats a prayer invoking the blessing of Allah on his offspring, and then pronounces three times in its ear the name chosen for it. Should he be unacquainted with the formula, the parish priest is called in to assist him in the performance of this duty. The Moslem equivalent for the rite of baptism is of course circumcision, but this may be, and usually is, deferred for some years.

Among the many restrictions to which the mother is subjected by custom, the *Ebbé*, and her female relatives generally, is that of refraining from pure water either for drinking or ablutionary purposes. If thirsty, she may partake of 'sherbet' made from sugar-candy and spices, or a tisane of lime flowers or maidenhair fern. Little rest is, however, allowed her, for, as soon as the interesting event is made publicly known, her chamber is crowded with relatives and friends who hasten to offer their felicitations, and usually sit there for hours discussing the sweets, coffee, and other refreshments which it is customary to offer on these occasions. On the third day a *djemiet*, or formal reception, is held by the mother, for which invitations have been issued on the preceding day conveyed verbally by

an old woman whose profession is that of *musdadji*, or 'bringer of tidings,' and accompanied by bottles of the above-described 'sherbet.' Open house is also kept on this day, and all visitors, whether invited or not, are hospitably received, but with this difference—the bidden guests sit down to luncheon, while the unbidden are regaled with light refreshments only. Hired Gipsy musicians receive at the door of the *haremlik* and escort upstairs the more distinguished guests, who arrive in parties preceded by servants carrying baskets of sweets prettily decorated with flowers, enveloped in gauze, and tied with ribbons. If the father holds an official post, it is customary for his fellow-officials and subordinates to send with the basket of sweets more or less valuable presents. Among the poorer classes, however, gifts of coffee, sugar, cakes, etc., are, on these occasions, brought by the visitors in order to lessen for the family the expense of the customary hospitality. After divesting themselves of their out-of-door veils and cloaks in an anteroom, according to Turkish custom when paying calls, the visitors are ushered with ceremonious formality into the state bed-chamber.

'*Mashallah*—in the name of Allah—long-lived and happy it may be!' exclaim the matrons in turn to the happy mother, who kisses their hands in acknowledgment of their good wishes. Little or no notice is, however, taken of the infant

personally, as its near relatives are best pleased when its presence is altogether ignored, and so spared the risk of the ' Evil Eye ' being cast upon it. Should, however, feminine curiosity and interest in babies prove too strong to allow of the new arrival being entirely ignored, the matrons, after feigning to spit on it to avert the ' Evil Eye,' conceal their private approval under such disparaging remarks as ' Nasty ugly little thing '—to show their good-will. For, in the East, it is most unadvisable openly to express admiration for either persons or things, as any future accident or misfortune is certain to be attributed to the malice or ill-will underlying the honeyed words of commendation.

But amulets, spittings, and abusive epithets notwithstanding, it is considered expedient to make doubly sure that no ill effects of the dreaded ' Evil Eye ' have been left behind. So no sooner has the last guest departed than the *Ebé*, assisted by the women of the household, proceeds to ascertain this by the following process. A handful of cloves are procured and thrown singly on the hot embers of the charcoal brazier, one for each visitor. If the clove explodes with a report, it is held to be proof positive that the person named with it has cast the *nazar* on mother or child—or, it may be, on both. As an immediate exorcism, snips of their hair are placed on the charcoal embers, and the supposed sufferers are fumigated

with the smoke arising therefrom. This is followed by spittings, blowings, prayers, and divers mysterious incantations which are persisted in until a fit of yawning announces that the spell has been removed. An old woman is, however, next despatched on some pretext or other to the dwelling of the person suspected, with the object of surreptitiously obtaining possession of some scrap of her clothing with which to make a further fumigation; and this successfully accomplished, the minds of the mother and her friends are, for the time being at least, set at rest.

Among the poorer classes, the bath ceremony usually takes place on the fourth day after the birth of a child, but with the wealthy it is often deferred until the eighth day. On the occasion of the birth of a first-born, great formality is customary. If the ceremony is to take place in the private *hammam* usually attached to the *haremlik* division of a mansion, a number of friends are invited to join in the ablutions, and partake of luncheon and other refreshments. If, however, the public baths are resorted to, the invited matrons, accompanied by their attendants bearing the bath requisites in bundle-wraps, assemble at the house, and, preceded by the Wise Woman carrying the baby, walk thither in procession. After being formally divested of her garments in the *saoukluk*, or 'cool room,' the mother is enveloped in a silken bath-wrap, and,

shod with a pair of high pattens of walnut-wood inlaid with silver, is led into the hot chamber, supported on one side by the *Hammamdji Hanum*, or Head Bathwoman, and on the other side by a relative, and followed by the rest of the company.

The baby is first taken in hand, and after it has been well rubbed and scrubbed, the Wise-woman turns her attention to the mother. Before commencing operations, however, she throws a bunch of keys into the marble basin, mutters a spell of a religious character, and then blows three times into the water, these preliminary precautions being taken against the *Peris* who especially haunt the waters. The usual ablutionary routine is then proceeded with by the company generally. At its conclusion the young mother is placed in a reclining position on the raised marble slab in the centre of the hot chamber, and her body thickly plastered over with a species of unguent composed of honey and various aromatic condiments, held to possess strengthening and recuperating properties. This is left on for about an hour, the tedium of the process being enlivened by the ladies of the company with songs and conversation, and every now and again they transfer with their forefingers some of the spicy compound to their mouths, it being considered lucky to get a taste of it. When what remains of the unguent after the *hanums* have thus regaled themselves has been washed off, the mother is wrapped in her

havlu, or robe of Turkey towelling, the fringed borders of which are embroidered in gold thread, and conducted back to the spacious 'cool room.' The guests seat themselves cross-legged on the raised and cushioned platform surrounding this apartment ; but before taking her own place the hostess proceeds to kiss in turn the hands of all the senior matrons present, the salute being acknowledged with the good wish, ' May it be to your good health ! '

The circumcision of a boy is by Moslems made the occasion of another important family ceremony called the *sunnet dughun*, the festivities with which it is celebrated extending over a whole week. Hospitable on all occasions, the Turks are pre-eminently so on this, when it is held to be a religious duty to show special attention and regard to the poor and needy. Consequently, people of the labouring class who cannot themselves afford the expense of a *sunnet dughun* for their boys defer the rite until they hear that the son of some grandee in their neighbourhood is about to be circumcised, when they send in the names of their boys with the request that they may be allowed to participate. The rich man, if a good Moslem, will grant this permission to as many of the sons of his poor neighbours as his means allow of, such acts of piety being held to be well pleasing unto Allah ; and when a circumcision ceremony takes place in the Imperial Palace, custom requires that

the Padishah should place no limit on the number of participants. As the head of the house in which a *sunnet dughun* is celebrated is in duty bound to furnish each candidate for initiation with a complete outfit of clothing and defray all other attendant expenses, it is often an exceedingly expensive affair for a man of rank ; and even among the middle classes, who limit the festivities to one day, the obligatory minimum expenditure is seldom under ten pounds.

The first day of a Turkish child's school life is considered so important an event that it is celebrated with a little ceremony as interesting as it is quaint. Dressed in his holiday suit and bedecked with all the jewels and personal ornaments which his parents possess or can borrow for the occasion, his little fez almost concealed with strings of gold coins, pendants, and pearl tassels, and various little objects worn as charms against the 'Evil Eye,' and his finger-tips tinged with henna, he is mounted on a superbly caparisoned horse, and led in pompous procession through the streets of the neighbourhood. In front of him his future instructors walk backwards, slowly and gravely, as if to prolong the ceremony. Behind him an elder boy carries on a silken cushion a copy of the Koran, to know which holy book by heart entitles a youth or maiden to the honourable title of *Hafiz* ; another bears his folding bookstand of walnut wood inlaid with

mother-of-pearl, on which the sacred volume is placed when open ; a third holds his *chanta*, or writing-case of velvet, embroidered with stars and crescents in gold thread. Behind these come all his future schoolfellows, walking two and two, and chanting verses said to have been composed by the Prophet extolling the pleasures of knowledge, exhorting to love of one's neighbour, and inciting to industry. These canticles conclude with good wishes for their new companion, eulogies of his parents and teachers, and finally, glorification of the Sultan, all the bystanders loyally joining in the refrain of *Amin ! Amin !* On returning to the boy's home his father distributes coppers to his schoolfellows, and also to the crowd of poor folk sure to be collected round the gateway. This ceremony is repeated when the boy passes his first examination, his *hodja* being presented at the same time with a Turkish *lira* (18s.) and a suit of linen.

(2) Marriage Ceremonies

The Osmanlis, in common with all Moslems, hold the estate of marriage in great esteem. For it is related in the *Hadith*, or 'Traditions,' that Mohammed said, 'When the servant of Allah marries he perfects the half of his religion.' Early marriages are, consequently, for this as well as for other reasons, the rule among the

Osmanlis, the patriarchal customs alluded to in a previous chapter making it unnecessary for a youth to wait until he has a home of his own before taking a wife. Formerly, youths of eighteen were married to girls of from twelve to fifteen ; but nowadays such very youthful couples are seldom met with, though at a friend's house I once saw a bride of twelve who was the wife of a Turkish orderly in the service of the Pasha, my friend's husband.

When, accordingly, it has been decided by the family council that the time has arrived for a youth to marry, his mother, if she has not already chosen a bride for him, makes inquiries among her friends and of the old women brokers—who act also as ' go-betweens ' in matters matrimonial—as to families having pretty and marriageable daughters. This ascertained, she drives to each harem in turn, accompanied by one or more near relatives and the go-between. Introductions are unnecessary, but the object of the visit is mentioned to the slaves who, on their entering, come forward to remove, according to custom, the outdoor garments of the visitors. The lady of the house, informed of this, hastens to receive her guests with all honour, and should there be more than one daughter, the eldest proceeds to dress and adorn herself for inspection—for among the Turks, as with their Greek neighbours, daughters are married according to seniority. The two

mothers meanwhile exchange conventional compliments until the *portière* is raised and the maiden enters and, after saluting the strangers by kissing their hands, offers to each in turn a cup of coffee from the tray which has been brought in at the same time by a slave. While this is being partaken of, she stands in modest attitude; and, after removing the empty cups, salaams and vanishes.

‘*Mashalla!* What a beauty! Your daughter, *Hanum Effendi*, is like a full moon!’—so the visitors, whatever their private opinion may be, are required by etiquette to exclaim. Other compliments follow, and then the chief *Guerudji*, or ‘Viewer,’ proceeds to expatiate on the good qualities of the would-be bridegroom, mentions the amount of the *nekyah*, or marriage settlements he or his family are prepared to offer, makes inquiries as to the girl’s age and fortune, if any, and finally departs with the conventional hope that, ‘should Kismet have decreed it, they may become better acquainted.’ It is considered no slight if nothing further comes of such a visit of inspection, which is allowed to be, in legal phrase, ‘without prejudice.’ After some half-dozen harems have been thus visited, the lady returns home to describe the various damsels to her husband and son; and, the selection made, intermediaries are despatched to the family of the fortunate maiden to settle the preliminaries.

Meanwhile, though the youth may not, of course, see the maiden unveiled, she, on her side, is naturally anxious to see her future husband ; and an opportunity for this is usually arranged by the respective mothers in the course of a drive abroad, when he will be found at some spot previously agreed upon. Boy and girl friendships, however, not infrequently survive the intervening years of separation, and, developing into a warmer feeling, end in happy marriages. For in the young, romance is stronger than social and religious conventionalities ; and love can, and frequently does, surmount even the barriers of harem restraint. When the parties to the contract are mutually satisfied, the conventional betrothal gifts—a silver jewel-box, hand-mirror, and other toilet requisites—are sent to the bride, who in her turn presents the bridegroom with a jewelled snuff-box, cashmere shawl, etc. His mother then visits the bride, taking with her some yards of red silk and a basket of bonbons. The former is spread on the floor in front of the divan, and on it the bride stands when she approaches to kiss the hand of her future mother-in-law, who presents her with the sweets and her blessing. Half a bonbon bitten in two by the girl's pearly teeth is conveyed back to the bridegroom, presumably as a first love-token. A few days later the *aghirlik*, a sum of money which is practically the bridegroom's contribution to the expenses of the

wedding festivities, is sent to the maiden's father ; and this betrothal is followed eight days later by the legal marriage.

According to the law of Islam, marriage is not a religious but a civil contract, the validity of which consists in its being attested by at least two witnesses. The ceremony takes place in the house of the bride's father, in the *selamlık* of which the amount of the *nekyah*—the before-mentioned sum to be paid to the bride in the event of divorce—is finally discussed and formally agreed to. The contract drawn up and attested, the bridegroom stands up and thrice proclaims his desire to wed the daughter of Selim Effendi, or Ali Bey, as the case may be. Thereupon the Imam, who is present in his legal capacity, proceeds with the maiden's father to the door of communication with the women's apartments, and after declaring the amount of the *nekyah* offered, asks the maiden if she is willing to wed So-and-so. When the question has been thrice asked and thrice affirmatively answered, the Imam returns to the *selamlık*, the contract is formally signed and witnessed, and the parties are legally man and wife.

But before the young couple may see or hold any communication with each other, this Legal Sanction must be supplemented by the Social Sanction which is manifested by public participation in the various ceremonies and festivities which precede the transfer of a bride

from her father's roof to her new home, such festivities being termed collectively the *dughun*. Some months may, however, pass before the *dughun* can take place, as elaborate preparations must be made for its due celebration, according to the social position and wealth of the contracting families. The wedding-dress, together with sundry accessories which it is customary for the bridegroom to furnish, are sent with great ceremony to the home of the bride a week before the date fixed for the commencement of the *dughun*, the rest of her trousseau being provided by her parents, as also is the 'plenishing' of household linen and bedding. To these are added a supply of kitchen utensils, all of copper; furniture for two rooms covered with costly material, together with a handsome brass *mangal*, or brazier and stand; various articles of walnut-wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ivory, or silver, such as dinner-trays and stands, dustpans, bath-pattens, etc.

The wedding festivities extend over a week, and however ill a father can afford the expenses inseparable from their due celebration, custom compels him to incur them. Such festivities are, in fact, the delight of the general run of Osmanli women, and it is a point of honour with a mother to celebrate her daughter's *dughun* with as great *éclat* as possible. The ceremonies begin on a Monday, when a number of relatives and friends assemble at the bride's home to escort the trousseau

seau and plenishing to the bridegroom's abode. The coffers containing the articles are carried on the backs of porters under the supervision of the ancient *Koulavouz*, or go-between, who is responsible for its safe delivery, the former receiving at the hands of the bridegroom's mother, in addition to their fee, a *chevreh*, or embroidered napkin.

The ladies follow on foot or in carriages, according to the distance, and after partaking of coffee and sweets, proceed to decorate the apartments destined for the bride's special occupation. Some fasten strings along the walls, on which they display the various articles of the trousseau, together with the cashmere shawls and Persian prayer-carpets, the embroidered sheets and pillow-slips, towels and bundle-wraps, all disposed with a view to artistic effect. In one corner of the room a canopy is constructed of gauzes, embroideries, and crape flowers, beneath which the jewels and other objects of value are arranged on a table under glass shades, while garlands of similar flowers are suspended along the four walls. This satisfactorily completed, the party turn their attention to the second apartment, where they set out the furniture and bedding, the stools of inlaid wood, the *hoshaf* tray, with its service of crystal bowl and ivory spoons, the candelabra, and the household requisites before mentioned.

On Tuesday the bride is taken with great ceremony to the public bath, the fees for the whole

party being, on this occasion, paid by the bridegroom. When ready to leave the inner hot chamber, the maiden, wearing of course only her bath robe, is led by her mother round the central platform on which the guests are seated, and kisses the hand of each matron in acknowledgment of the customary formula of congratulation and good wishes. The clothes she dons after this ablution, and wears until arrayed in her bridal finery, should not, according to traditional custom, belong to her, but be borrowed for the occasion.¹

Early in the afternoon of Wednesday the bridegroom's lady relatives proceed in a body to the home of the bride, preceded by the go-between, who announces with great formality their arrival. The bride's mother and all her assembled friends hasten to the foot of the staircase, and forming a double row in the entrance hall, the first couple place each a hand under the arms of the bridegroom's mother, supporting her as she ascends the stairs, the rest following suit with the other guests. The new arrivals, after having been divested of their outdoor garb, are conducted to a room set apart for their reception—it being

¹ This recalls a somewhat similar usage in some parts of Britain where a bride is advised to wear under her wedding dress

Something old and something new,
Something borrowed and something blue.

contrary to etiquette on this day for the two sets of guests to mingle—around which they seat themselves on the divan and are served with unsweetened coffee and cigarettes. An hour later sweetened coffee is handed round; and as soon as the cups have been removed the bride enters, still wearing her borrowed garments; and supported on either side by a matron who has been only once married, she makes the tour of the room, kissing the hands of all present, beginning with the bridegroom's mother and not omitting the youngest girl present. A chair is then placed for her close to this lady, on which she remains seated for a few minutes during which the matron transfers some sugar-stick from her mouth to that of her daughter-in-law, a custom which, together with the half sugar-plum sent to the bridegroom at the betrothal, would seem to be a survival of the ancient and widespread marriage-rite of 'food-sharing.' After having been entertained for some time by the performances of the musicians and dancing girls, the bridegroom's mother and her party take their leave, receiving at the same time an invitation to return in the evening for the *Khená* ceremony. The bride then again comes forward and conducts the guests to the foot of the staircase, where they throw over her a shower of small coins, which are forthwith scrambled for by the beggars, children, and hangers-on always to be found in great numbers

at the door of a *haremlık* during the progress of a *dughun*.

When the company are again assembled in the evening, a taper is handed to each of the younger members of the party, who, led by the bride and escorted by the musicians and dancing girls, descend to the garden. Winding in a long and wavy line, now between the fragrant flower-beds, and now in the shadow of the trees and shrubs, their rich dresses, bright jewels, fair faces, and floating hair fitfully lighted by the flickering tapers, their feet moving to the rhythm of the tinkling castanets and wild strains of the dusky-hued Gipsy girls, one might imagine these maidens a troop of *Peris* engaged in their nocturnal revels. Returning to the house, the bride, divested of her gay attire, enters the reception-room, holding her left arm across her brow, and seats herself on a stool in the centre of the apartment. The fingertips of her right hand are then covered thickly with henna paste, on which the bridegroom's mother sticks a gold coin, the other guests following suit. This hand, covered with a silken bag, is now held across her face, while the left hand is similarly plastered and decorated by the bride's mother and friends. When the maiden's toes have also been similarly treated, the ceremony is terminated with a wild pantomimic dance by the Gipsy performers, at the conclusion of which these women fall into exaggerated postures before

the principal ladies in order to receive their guerdon, which is looked for as much from the guests as from the hostess.

A bride is usually conducted to her new home on the morning of Thursday, accompanied by an immense concourse, the women in carriages and the men on horseback, and preceded by music. But before leaving the paternal roof a touching little ceremony takes place in private: the bride's father, in the presence only of her mother and sisters, girding his daughter with the 'wedding-girdle.' While performing this traditional farewell observance, the paterfamilias is, as a rule, deeply affected, and weeps in company with his wife and children. The departing bride falls at his feet and kisses them and his hands. He raises and presses her to his breast, and, after winding the girdle about her waist, gives her his paternal blessing. Arrived at her new home, the bride is received at the *haremlık* entrance by the bridegroom, who conducts her upstairs through the crowd of guests there assembled—the ladies on this occasion dispensing with their veils on the pretext that the only man present is too preoccupied to look at them!—to the seat of honour in the bridal chamber, and then rejoins his male guests in the *selamlık*. The bride's veil is then raised, and she and her trousseau remain for some hours on view, not only to the invited guests, but to all the women of the neighbourhood who now flock in to

gaze on the poor girl, the festivities being continued in both divisions of the house until evening.

After the customary evening prayers have been performed in the *selamlık*, the Imam, or parish-priest, who forms one of the company on such occasions, invokes a benediction on the young couple; and at its conclusion the bridegroom hurries towards the door leading to the *haremlık*, followed by his friends, who administer smart blows on his back and also throw at him with no gentle hand the shoes of which a supply will always be found in the entrance hall. The door at last shut between the happy man and his pursuers, he is led upstairs to the bridal chamber by the old *koulavouz*, who on this occasion acts as mistress of the ceremonies to the young couple. The bride rises from her seat as he enters, steps forward and kisses his hand. Her bridal veil of crimson silk is spread on the floor, and on it the husband kneels as he offers a brief prayer, the wife standing meanwhile on its edge. Bride and bridegroom are then seated side by side on the divan, and the *koulavouz* shows them in a mirror the reflection of their united faces, expressing at the same time a pious wish for the continuance of their present harmonious union. After serving the couple with coffee, she withdraws to make preparations for their supper. The hour of this meal will, however, depend on the humour of the bride, whose shyness, or obstinacy, must be over-

come to the extent at least of inducing her to speak to the bridegroom—an indispensable preliminary to his assuming any authority over her. Oriental brides are recommended by experienced matrons not to respond too readily to the advances of their husbands, who are occasionally compelled to have recourse to stratagem in order to obtain their supper. Once a word has been vouchsafed, however, the husband makes a signal, and the meal is served.

On the following morning, the couple enter, hand in hand, the principal reception-room of the house, where all the bridegroom's family await them, anxious to ascertain 'whether their stars have met,' which the women at least have no difficulty in discovering. Both salute the heads of the family by kissing their hands, and receive from them in return the customary presents. The two subsequent days are also devoted to harem festivities, during which the bride, in her wedding array, sits in state to receive the congratulatory visits of all the matrons included in the visiting lists of both families.

(3) *Funeral Ceremonies*

The divine calm of the Moslem spirit—the spirit of profound and complete resignation to the Will of Allah—is on no occasion more strongly manifested by the Osmanlis than in the presence of death. The pious Mohammedan may, indeed,

be said to have ever present to his mind the termination of earthly existence and the life beyond, and he regards the joys and allurements of this world as but illusions and shadows in comparison with the everlasting delights which await him in Paradise. While Kismet determines the events of a person's life, his *Edjel*, or 'appointed time,' has also been decreed for him by Allah who has inscribed both in invisible characters on the brow of every human being.

This unquestioning submission to the decrees of Fate renders death terrible to Moslems only in the abstract, and when viewed from a distance. In polite society it is never alluded to save under some poetical name, such as the 'Cupbearer of the Sphere,'¹ and prefaced by the words, 'Far be it from you!' and the common people before uttering the word invariably spit—an action which has much the same signification. Such a fatalistic view of life and death naturally causes the Osmanli populace to regard the medical art with scant respect. If a person believes himself to have heard the call 'Return,' he will die, doctors and 'charmners' notwithstanding; and if the 'appointed time' has not yet arrived, he will recover—so why trouble him with drugs? When the 'Cupbearer of the Sphere' is believed to be at hand, the relations of the moribund gather round the couch, weeping silently, or reciting

¹ See also p. 293.

prayers to keep away the evil spirits believed to be ever on the alert to harass and torment a departing soul. If the dying person be conscious and able to speak, *helal*, or free forgiveness of all injuries, is requested and granted on both sides. Pious bequests, too, are often made on death-beds and slaves set free, charity of this kind having been specially commended by the Prophet.

The wailing of the women commences as soon as the last breath has been drawn. Those most affected by the sad event beat their breasts and tear their hair in a passionate outburst of genuine grief. As soon, however, as this first expression of sorrow has exhausted itself, preparations are commenced for performing the last rites to the dead, and invitations are at once issued for the funeral, which takes place either on the same or on the following day. When the eyes of the dead have been closed and the chin has been bandaged, the body is placed, covered only with a sheet, on the *rahat latak*, or 'Couch of Ease,' a kind of stretcher on which, in the case of a man, it is borne to the courtyard of the house to be washed by the Imam and his subordinates. For a woman, however, these last ablutions are performed in private by 'washers' of her own sex. As a peculiarly sacred character is attached to this ablutionary rite, great reverence is invariably observed in carrying out every detail of the ceremony. The body is kept covered as much as possible, and

handled with great gentleness and care, as any rough or disrespectful usage may, it is believed, draw upon the offending washer the 'wrath of the dead.' For the 'Traditions' of Mohammed, as well as the works of Moslem doctors, teach that a dead body is conscious of pain, and great care is consequently taken to avoid undue pressure while washing a corpse.

These observances concluded, and the hour fixed for the funeral arrived, the door of the chamber of death is thrown open, and the guests enter, preceded by the Imam. The latter, addressing those present, says, 'O congregation, what do you consider this man's (or woman's) life to have been?' 'Good,' is invariably the response. 'Then give *helal* to him.' The *helal* given, the coffin—draped with rich shawls and stuffs, and bearing, for a man, his turban or fez on a projection at the head, and, for a woman, her *chimbér*, or coif—is raised on the shoulders of four or more men, and borne to the cemetery, followed by a long procession of male mourners, clad in their ordinary attire. It being considered a meritorious act to carry a dead body even for a short distance, forty paces only absolving the performer from a mortal sin, the bearers at a Moslem funeral are consequently relieved at short intervals by others desirous of obtaining the benefits conferred by the performance of this religious duty. No lugubrious chants, no noisy

demonstrations of woe, such as often attend the obsequies of Eastern Christians and Jews, mark the progress of the Moslem to his last resting-place. In reverent silence the procession takes its way to the mosque, where the first part of the burial service—which is very beautiful and impressive—is read.

‘Earth to earth’ burial is customary with the Turks, whose graves are orientated, like the holy places of their mosques, in the direction of the holy Kaaba at Mecca. On arriving at the cemetery, the coffin is accordingly placed by the side of the grave, the lid removed, and the body, gently lifted out by six persons by means of the bands before mentioned, is laid in the grave. When the remainder of the prayers and passages from the Koran constituting the burial service have been recited, two or three boards are fixed in the earth above the corpse, the grave is filled in, and the mourners return home. The Imam, however, remains for a time beside the grave, in order, it is said, to prompt the deceased in his replies to the ‘Questioners’—the two angels Mounkir and Nekir, who, according to Moslem belief, enter the grave with the dead to interrogate him concerning his faith.¹ If the dead has

¹ According to a belief common to many Oriental races, the soul retains after death some mysterious connexion with the body, which cannot be buried without it. This belief may be illustrated by the following little Dervish story: As the corpse of Kera Kadin, the saintly wife of the illustrious founder of the

been a devout Moslem, his reply will be, 'My God is Allah; my Prophet, Mohammed; my religion, Islam; and my *Kibla*, the Kaaba.' If, however, he has been but an indifferent follower of the Prophet, he will not be able to remember the formula of his creed. In the former case the angels give the dead a foretaste of the delights of Paradise; while in the latter they afflict him with divers torments.

The aspect of the great cemeteries on the outskirts of the capital and the larger cities is indeed calculated to inspire supernatural terrors. Groves of tall, gloomy cypresses of incalculable age overshadow the vast areas occupied by the bodies of the Faithful—for no two bodies are buried in one grave—casting deep shadows even at noonday; and as far as the eye can reach in any direction is an interminable array of grey headstones, standing erect, slanting or lying prone. If gloomy in the brilliant Eastern noonday, it is in the twilight

Mevlevi Order of Dervishes, was being carried to the grave followed by an immense concourse of the Brotherhood, the bearers suddenly found themselves unable for a time to proceed—an occurrence which greatly exercised the minds of the 'Brethren of Love.' A holy man of the Order, however, received the explanation that same night in a dream. At the spot at which the procession had been brought to a standstill, a man and a woman had, on the preceding day, been stoned to death for adultery, and the lady's soul had left her body in order to intercede for them with the All Merciful. Their forgiveness obtained, her spirit had returned to earth and the bearers were then enabled to proceed with her body.—*The Acts of the Adepts*, in Redhouse's Translation of the *Mesnevi*.

weirdly uncanny, and by night a place of fearsome horror, peopled with ghouls and vampires ; and a Moslem would rather face death by knife, pistol, or poison than put himself in the way of encountering these gruesome denizens of the cities of the dead.

The tombstones placed at the head of a grave are usually four or five feet in height, either cylindrical or flat, and tapering towards the base, which causes them after a time to lean in all directions, giving to a cemetery a somewhat fantastic appearance. Round the cylinder or on the flat surface is finely engraved a long inscription, often touched up with gold, consisting of an invocation to Allah or a passage from the Koran, followed by a summary account of the life of the deceased, prominence being given to the spiritual side. The more ancient headstones of men's graves are surmounted by carved representations of turbans ; but since the use of the simpler fez has become general, this has been substituted, painted crimson, and with a dark blue tassel. The headstones of women and girls are often finished at the top with some conventional design of which the sunflower forms a favourite example, and the inscriptions which follow the invocation to the 'Abiding One' are, with few exceptions, in verse.

On the occasion of the death of a person in good circumstances, gifts are made to the poor from

among his or her personal effects, and money is also distributed as alms to the needy of the neighbourhood. Three days afterwards, a large batch of *loukmà*—a kind of dough-nut or *beignet*—is made, plates of which are sent round to the houses of friends, the poor also receiving their share of these funeral cates, in return for which their prayers are requested for the soul of the departed. This ceremony is repeated on the seventh and fortieth days after the funeral, and on the latter occasion a dole of loaves is added. Prayer for the dead is, indeed, considered by Moslems a religious duty of the highest importance. On the tombstones in Turkish cemeteries may often be found engraved appeals to the passers-by to offer on behalf of the occupant of the grave a *Fatiha*, or recitation of the opening chapter of the Koran, a passage which may be deemed the Moslem equivalent for the Christian Paternoster—this pious act being customary with all ‘True Believers’ on visiting the tombs of departed friends or the shrines of the saintly dead.

No external signs of mourning are used, or periods of seclusion observed by Osmanlis after the death of a relative. Female friends pay visits of condolence to the harem; and the ladies, after acknowledging the customary expressions of sympathy and good wishes for their future exemption from bereavement, speak calmly and resignedly of the departed. Excessive sorrow for children is

considered by Moslems to be not only sinful, but detrimental to the repose of their souls and their happiness in Paradise. It is, however, on the other hand, esteemed an act of filial duty to mourn constantly for lost parents, and to pray unceasingly for their forgiveness and acceptance with Allah.

CHAPTER XV

OSMANLI BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

‘**I**N what does the religion of Islam consist?’ Mohammed was one day asked by the Angel Gabriel, who appeared to him in the guise of a Bedouin.

‘In professing,’ replied the Prophet, ‘that there is but one God, and that I am His Prophet; in observing strictly the hours of prayer; in giving alms; in fasting during the month of Ramazan; and in making the pilgrimage to Mecca.’

‘It is so, in truth,’ responded Gabriel, who then made himself known.

These main tenets of Mohammedanism are figuratively termed the ‘Five Pillars of Practice,’ and comprise all that is of supreme importance in the religion of Islam. The term Moslem signifies ‘resigned’—resigned to the mysterious decrees of an irresponsible Ruler who, though He has revealed a certain moral law for the guidance of His creatures, is Himself above all law and morality. This view of the Almighty as ‘the only potentate, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings,’ recurs all through the Koran, and is curiously

illustrated by the formula of devotion termed the *Namaz*, instituted by Mohammed. In Islam there is, properly speaking, no ritual, no sacrifice of horned beasts as in Judaism, nor of the Mass as in Christianity, nor do the *Ulema*¹ constitute a spiritual hierarchy; for the *Imam* lays claim to no priestly rank, but merely for convenience sake leads the collective devotions of the congregation in the mosque. The mosque itself is indeed merely a convenience, for so long as the worshipper's face is turned towards Mecca the *Namaz* may be equally well recited elsewhere—in the privacy of the harem, in the public thoroughfares, or in the Council Chamber.

This obligatory form of devotion, which is performed five times daily, consists merely of two or more repetitions of a ceremony called the *rikat*, or 'prostration,' which is little more than the recitation, in various prescribed attitudes, of certain formulæ, such as 'God is most Great!' 'We give praise unto Allah!' etc. This act of worship is invariably preceded by ablution, as prayer must be made in a state of 'legal purity,' and for this facilities are offered by the fountains

¹ The important body of Moslem legists and theologians are thus collectively termed. This Order consists of three classes: (1) the *Imams* or parish priests, the *Hodjas* and other inferior functionaries of the mosques; (2) the *Muftis*, or Doctors of Law; and (3) the *Mollahs* and *Kadis*, the last two categories being subdivided into a number of intermediate ranks pertaining to the special departments included in the Court of the *Sheriat* or Ecclesiastical Law.

with which the courtyard of every mosque is supplied. Such an ablution is termed the *abtest*, and consists in washing the hands and forearms, the face and feet in running water. When water is not procurable, the *abtest* may be made with sand, gravel, or dust. Prayer-carpets are used when possible in order to guard against any impurity on the spot where the prayer is offered. To say of a man that he performs his *Namaz* five times daily is the highest praise that can be awarded, and Moslems who are themselves careless in this matter, respect the punctiliousness of the devout who, in the fulfilment of their religious duties, disdain concealment, reckon not of ridicule or comment, and believe too utterly themselves to care if others disbelieve.

The fatalistic notion of *Kismet* inculcated by the Moslem doctrine of predestination importantly influences Turkish thought and action—or inaction—as it assumes that all events affecting mankind are absolutely preordained by Allah, who has written them down in ‘the Preserved Tablets,’ delivered to the Angels on the ‘Night of Destiny.’ Many people besides Turks are fatalists ; but when ill they usually consult a doctor, and take other ordinary precautions against disaster. In the opinion of old-fashioned Moslems, however, all such precautions are vain ; if it is their *Kismet* that calamity shall overtake them, overtake them it will, and what, then, is the good of troubling

oneself with efforts to avert it? That fortune helps those who help themselves is a doctrine incomprehensible to Orientals. Whatever energy a man may display, Kismet will override his endeavours, or crown his supineness with equally unmerited and unexpected prosperity; and many are the folk-tales, some not without humour, illustrating and confirming popular belief in this great factor in human affairs. The effects of such a mental attitude are naturally far-reaching. For not only are lives constantly sacrificed and wealth and happiness missed by this fatal principle of passivity, but the whole character of the nation is enfeebled. Neglect of all sanitary precautions—not to say hostility towards them—is one important result of Kismet.

The religious laws by which men are ruled in Moslem countries aimed at the establishment of a certain degree of equality within a nation by lessening the sufferings of the poor. Thus while Christians merely pray for 'Peace on earth and goodwill among men,' Mohammed, being eminently a practical reformer, made it incumbent on his followers not merely to give of their superfluity to the poor, but to share with them a considerable proportion of their worldly goods. *Salaam aleikoum*—'Peace be to thee,' is ever the Moslem's greeting to his fellow Moslem; and in no more practical way than by such self-denying alleviation of the miseries of the less fortunate can

men be made brothers, and be literally 'at peace' with each other. And that the merely secular laws by which the West has been governed have fallen lamentably short of such happy results is abundantly proved by the growth in all European countries of Socialism and Nihilism. Almsgiving, which includes also hospitality, being thus one of the 'Pillars of Practice' of the religion of Islam, though more especially exercised during religious festivals and on the occasion of family ceremonies, is practised by Moslems whenever opportunity occurs. For, as an Arabic proverb says, 'Whoso visits a living person and eats nothing at his house, might as well visit the tomb of a dead man.'

Various European writers, from Montesquieu downwards, have assumed and asserted—though on what authority it would be difficult to ascertain—that the religion of Islam denies to woman the possession of a soul, and, consequently, admission to Paradise. Although such an assertion could not honestly be made by any one acquainted either with Islamic religious books or religious thought, this assumed Moslem debasement of women has been eagerly seized upon by the 'Subjection of Women' theorists; and it may not, therefore, be superfluous to point out briefly how utterly at variance with facts is such an assumption. In the first place, the Koran is most explicit on this point, and numerous texts, of which the following may serve as examples,

promise the joys of Paradise to all 'true Moslems' irrespective of sex.

'God has promised to believers, men and women, gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever, and goodly places in the Garden of Eden.'¹

'Verily men resigned and women resigned, and believing men and believing women, and devout men and devout women, and truthful men and truthful women, and patient men and patient women, and humble men and humble women, and almsgiving men and almsgiving women, and fasting men and fasting women . . . and men who remember God much and women who remember Him—God has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.'²

The Hadith, or 'Traditional Sayings' of Mohammed, also record that the Prophet of Islam imparted to his followers his divinely acquired knowledge that certain of their deceased friends had been rewarded for their faith by admission to Paradise. Among them, he said, was his departed wife and first convert, Khadija, whom he had been 'commanded to gladden with the good tidings of a chamber of hollow pearl in which is no clamour and no fatigue'—surely a delightful vision of the 'rest that remaineth for the people of God.' And in the following little elegy on a Sultana who died in the bloom of youth, the poet

¹ *Koran*, chap. ix. v. 73.

² *Ibid.*, chap. xxxiii. v. 35.

Fazil admirably depicts the Oriental belief in both physical and spiritual consciousness after death :—

Ah ! thou'st laid her low, yet flushed with life, Cupbearer
of the Sphere !¹

Scarce the cup of joy was tasted when the bowl of Fate
brimmed o'er.

Cradle her, O Earth ! full gently ; smile on her, O Trusted
One !²

For a wide world's King this Fair Pearl as his heart's own
darling wore !

If further evidences were necessary to prove that the slavish subjection of women which is generally assumed to be inseparable from Moham-
medanism was neither preached nor practised by the Prophet, it may be found also in the honour and regard paid by him to his wives, and especially to Khadija and A'isha. A'isha lived in virtuous and honourable widowhood for forty-eight years, during which, having been the most intimate confidante of the Prophet, she was consulted in all difficulties that arose after his death in points of religion and law. A large proportion of the 'Traditional Sayings' were indeed, according to the Moslem commentators, compiled from her replies, which were based on the opinions she had heard her late husband express. And after uttering the names of A'isha and other saintly women, Moslems invariably add : 'May they find acceptance with Allah !'

¹ See p. 279.

² The Prophet Mohammed.

Although regular attendance at public worship on the Day of Rest is not required of Moslem, any more than it is, in the East, of Christian or Jewish women, all the usual ordinances of their religion—performance of the five daily *Namaz*, fasting, pilgrimage, and ‘good works’ generally—are as obligatory for Moslem women as they are for Moslem men. Children of both sexes are taught their prayers at the age of seven; and the honourable title of *Hafiz* is conferred on any Moslem who may have committed to memory the whole of the Koran—a by no means unusual feat, it would seem, if we are to credit the seventeenth-century traveller and author Evliya Effendi, who records that the city of Angora at the time of his visit to it contained no fewer than two thousand boys and girls who were *Hafiz*.

The supernatural beings with whom the Osmanlis terrify themselves and their children have by no means the variety of those of their neighbours belonging to other nationalities, and fall, for the most part, under the denomination either of *Djins* or *Peris*. Under this term are, however, popularly classed supernals generally, including the *Tellestim* which haunts ancient buildings and guards buried treasure, besides other uncanny beings whose propensities resemble those of the goblins and pixies of Western Europe. Some houses are believed to be haunted by Djins of the last-named description, who are called *Ev-*

Sahibi or 'Lords of the House.' If these are well-disposed Djins, they bring all kinds of prosperity to their hosts ; and no matter how idle or extravagant the good-wife may be, everything prospers with the household. The *Ev-Sahibi* are popularly said to be clothed in bridal garments edged with tiny bells, the tinkling of which announces their presence, and they sometimes allow themselves to be perceived by those whom they specially honour with their favour. The malevolent *Ev-Sahibi*, on the other hand, are most mischievous in disposition, and destroy the property of the family, besides annoying its members with intolerable nocturnal noises. In common with other magical beings, these Djins have the power of assuming any shape they please, from that of a shadowy being of colossal proportions, or a beautiful youth or maiden, down to that of a cat or dog, or even a pitcher or broom. Both the good Djins, or *Peris*, who serve Allah, and the evil Djins, the followers of *Eblis*, the Spirit of Darkness, are believed to have been created before man, Adam having, according to Oriental legend, married as his second wife a woman belonging to this race, whose name was *Lilith*. The evilly disposed Djins were cast out from heaven with *Eblis*, whose rebellion against the Most High consisted in his refusal to pay homage to the newly created Adam, when so commanded by his Creator. Djins are popularly held to be of both

sexes, and appear also to propagate their kind. One of their propensities is to carry off by night the clothes of humans—especially the gala dresses of women—to wear at their nocturnal revels. And if such a garment appears to its owner to be rapidly losing its freshness, she concludes that the Djins have taken a fancy to it, and regrets not having had it ‘blessed’ by some holy man before wearing it—which precaution would have rendered it safe from the depredations of these uncanny folk.

The magical practices of the Osmanlis, though derived in great part from legendary lore, are also borrowed to a considerable extent from so-called ‘Occult Science.’ As sickness as well as every other calamity is usually attributed to the influence of a magical spell, when any one falls ill the women of the family—for it need hardly be said that the firmest believers in this mode of spiritual cure are of the female sex—send for some saintly Sheikh in order that he may remove the spell, or avert its maleficent influence. This holy man, whose breath, sanctified by the constant repetition of the name of the Deity, is believed to have acquired a supernatural healing power, proceeds to make a series of breathings on the head and the afflicted parts of the sufferer, accompanied by the imposition of his hands. These concluded, he produces a tiny scroll of paper inscribed with some words from the Koran, and

orders it either to be swallowed by the patient or soaked in water and the liquid to be drunk, or perhaps to be worn on the person for a given number of days. But whatever the success, or lack of success, of these strange remedies, nothing shakes the faith in them of the meek-minded, failure being attributed to want of faith on the part of the recipient. The holy man in any case receives a fee for his services either in coin or kind ; and if a speedy recovery follow his visit this will be proportionately liberal. The words used as exorcisms and counterspells are, for the most part, taken from the two chapters of the Koran relating to witchcraft and malevolence,¹ of which the following is the opening verse :—

‘ Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of the Daybreak, that He may deliver me from the mischief of these things which He hath created, and from the mischief of the night when it cometh on, and from the mischief of women blowing on knots, and from the mischief of the envious,’² etc.

The annual fasts observed by Moslems are seven in number, the most important being the month-long Fast of Ramazan. This period of abstinence being held to be of divine institution,

Chapters cxiii. and cxiv.

Compare with this Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline*, Act ii. Scene 2 :

To your protection I commend me, gods !
From fairies and the tempters of the night
Guard me, beseech ye !

its observance is therefore compulsory for all True Believers over the age of fourteen, travellers and the sick being alone exempt. Ramazan is celebrated in the ninth month of the Mohammedan year, during the whole of which food, drink, and tobacco are rigidly abstained from between sunrise and sunset. The year consisting of twelve lunar months only, the Fast makes in the course of time the round of the seasons. To the wealthy this annual period of abstinence offers no great hardship, as they merely turn night into day, and official duties are reduced to a minimum in the departments of State. But to the labouring section of the population, who are the most punctilious in the performance of religious performances, Ramazan—especially when it falls in summer—constitutes a period of real penance and mortification of the flesh. For Moslems generally this Fast also constitutes a sort of revival time, during which Western innovations, wherever adopted, are for the time being abandoned, and the simpler native customs reverted to. Services are held every evening in the mosques, hospitality is largely exercised, and the poor are loaded with benefits in response to the exhortation of the Muezzim, who during this season concludes the usual call to prayer with the words : ‘ Give food, all ye Faithful, unto the orphan and the indigent, the wayfarer and the bondsman, for His sake, saying : “ We feed you for Allah’s sake, and we

desire no word of thanks from you, nor any recompense.” ’

Much time is also devoted during this season to religious observances and devotional acts, many devout persons of both sexes habitually secluding themselves for a part of each day, either at home or in the mosques, and—especially during the last ten days of the Fast—abstaining from all worldly conversation. An hour or so before dawn the ‘Awakeners’—a Hodja, carrying a small hemispherical drum, accompanied by a boy with a lantern—go through the streets of the quarter to warn those who sleep that it is time to partake of the *sahor*, the last meal eaten before sunrise. Stopping before every house occupied by Moslems, the Hodja chants the following phrases: ‘He prospereth who saith—“There is no God save Allah! Mohammed, the Guide, is the Prophet of Allah!”’ precluded and followed by four rhythmical taps on the drum; after which he passes on with the greeting: ‘The happiest of nights unto thee, O Ali!’ or whatever may be the name of the householder. The meal partaken of, coffee-drinking and smoking fill up the brief interval until the boom of cannon announces sunrise, when the mouth is rinsed with water and again ‘sealed’ against food until evening.

Shortly before sunset the last *Namaz* of the day is performed, either in public or in private, previously to which the women of the household

will have made preparations for the *iftar*, as the evening meal eaten during Ramazan is termed. It is usual to serve first a variety of *hors-d'œuvre* together with goblets of iced fruit sherbet, and each person begins operations with the word *Bismillah*—‘In the name of Allah’—uttered as he helps himself to an olive, some special merit attaching to breaking the fast with that edible. After the *mezaliks*—as the Osmanlis term these trifles collectively—have been sparingly partaken of, the party sit down to the *iftar*, at which long, flat, unleavened cakes, plentifully besprinkled with sesame seed, are substituted for bread, and the usual courses are supplemented by various dainties prepared only at this season. It is also customary to present plates of these Ramazan dainties to Christian neighbours with whom a Turkish family may be on visiting terms, as well as to poor Moslem households. Shortly afterwards the service of devotion known as the *Terraweh* is performed either in private or in the mosque.

The conclusion of Ramazan is celebrated by the three days’ festival of Bairam, also called by names signifying respectively the ‘Breaking of the Fast’ and the ‘Feast of Alms,’ during which no work of any kind is done. On the first day of Bairam, every well-to-do person makes a present to his children, his slaves, and his subordinates, besides giving liberally to the poor. In the mornings the streets are thronged with people in holiday

costume, who go from house to house paying complimentary visits to friends and official superiors ; and after attending the midday *Namaz* in the mosques, the whole Moslem population abandons itself to decorous amusement.

A still more important festival than the ' Breaking of the Fast ' is the *Qurban Bairam*, or ' Feast of Sacrifice,' which takes place during the season of the pilgrimage to Mecca, its observance forming part of the rites of the pilgrims while at the Holy City. It is commemorative of Abraham's sacrifice, Ishmael being substituted for Isaac in the Moham-medan version of the story. For a week or more prior to this festival the market-place of every town and Turkish village throughout the Empire is occupied by flocks of sheep and lambs, and in the capital the wide open space in front of the beautiful mosque of Bayazid now presents a particularly picturesque and interesting spectacle. For here are gathered countless flocks, chiefly of the broad-tailed Karamanian breed, prospective victims for the traditional sacrifice, tended by a variety of wild-looking nomads in shaggy sheepskin coats—Wallachs from the Balkans, and Kurds, Yuruks, and Turcomans from the hills and plains of Asia Minor. Among them wander Moslem townsmen of all ranks, each householder who can afford the outlay purchasing a lamb for the sacrifice ; and until its day of doom the poor victim will be made a plaything of by his children,

who dye its fleece with henna or cochineal, and cover its budding horns with goldleaf. When on the morn of the festival the pet is no longer to be found in courtyard or garden, the disconsolate babies are told that it has 'been sent to the hills to eat grass, and get fat, and will come back again in a year's time.'

The flesh of these victims is divided into three portions, one of which is given to the poor, the second to widowed or other relations, the remaining third being eaten by the household. The rejoicings connected with this festival last four days. New garments are donned in its honour by both sexes and all classes, and gifts and almsgiving are the order of the day. These mild festivals are also punctuated with the spasmodic firing of volleys of small arms by the youth of the quarter—this being the Oriental equivalent of squibs and crackers—the sound of which seldom fails to create a certain amount of uneasiness among their Christian neighbours, varying in degree according to the political atmosphere of the moment. For in the history of their own times many have had tragical experience of how oft 'great events from little causes spring.' Quantities of cheap toys are, during the three days of Bairam, exhibited for sale in the public thoroughfares, and every one calling on friends and neighbours to wish them a 'Happy Bairam' will be laden with such offerings for the children, whom

they are sure to find with their fathers in the *selamlık* on these occasions.

The *Mevlud*, or Birthday of the Prophet, and the 'Feast of the Holy Mantle,' are also important Moslem festivals. On the latter occasion it is customary for the Sultan to proceed in state to what is known as the 'Old Serai,' the former Imperial residence, situated at the eastward point of Stamboul, washed on one side by the waters of the Sea of Marmora and on the other by those of the Golden Horn. For in the private mosque enclosed with other storied buildings within the encircling walls of this ancient home of the dynasty of Osman, is enshrined this sacred relic, which, at the conclusion of the midday *Namaz*, the Padi-shah, in his capacity of *Khalif*, or 'Successor,' unfolds with great solemnity from its forty silken wrappers. The Prophet's Mantle, which is displayed to the select company of high officials who have the honour of accompanying their Sovereign, is said to be merely a small fragment of cloth of a greenish colour. The day being reckoned by Moslems, as by Orientals generally, from sunset to sunset, the mosques and public buildings are illuminated on the eve of all these festivals. Very charming is the effect of the myriads of tiny oil-lamps encircling the tall minarets, outlining the domes and cupolas, and hanging in graceful festoons from point to point of the walls of these varied edifices.

As already mentioned, Pilgrimage to the Holy Cities of Islam is one of the Five Pillars of Practice of the Mohammedan religion. It is indeed considered the supreme act in the life of a True Believer, its due performance entitling him to a variety of spiritual blessings in the life to come, and for the rest of his life on earth to the honourable appellation of *Hadji*; and to accomplish it the pious shrink from no privation and fear no peril.

A complete pilgrimage includes, in addition to Mecca, visits to the Prophet's tomb at Medina, to the shrines of the Saints at Damascus and Jerusalem, and also to the tombs of Mohammed's grandsons, Hassan and Hussein, at Kerbeleh near Bagdad. Only Dervishes and the most zealous, however, aim at becoming such complete pilgrims, the majority being satisfied with having accomplished this religious duty in the obligatory degree. The three lunar months of *Shawal*, *Dhulkaade*, and *Dhulhajja* are dedicated to the pilgrimage which culminates in the rites appointed for the tenth day of the last-named month, after the performance of which a pilgrim is entitled to style himself *Hadji*. Previously to leaving home with this pious object, a Moslem is required to set his worldly affairs in order, pay any outstanding debts, and make suitable provision for the maintenance of his family during his absence.

This religious duty of pilgrimage, it may here be remarked, is as binding on women as on men.

An adult woman must, however, be at least nominally married before setting out, and be accompanied either by her husband or some near male relative who has a right to see her unveiled, while young girls can only go when accompanied by both parents. When at a certain stage of the journey their male companions don the 'sacred habit,' the women are even more hermetically shrouded in their cloaks and veils than ordinarily, it being lawful for the palms of their hands alone to be visible to the other sex.

Should any person desirous of accomplishing this religious duty be prevented by bodily infirmity, or other cause, from performing it in his own person, as may not unfrequently happen, it may be carried out by deputy. In order that the full merit of the act may accrue to himself, such a person must, however, defray all the expenses incidental to the pilgrimage, and at the same time satisfy the religious authorities who sanction the transaction that the funds have been honestly and honourably acquired—this being a *sine quâ non* for permission to set out on pilgrimage. Aged or dying persons who have not performed the pilgrimage also repeatedly leave testamentary instructions to the same effect.

In addition to this obligatory pilgrimage, Moslems, and especially Moslem women, make frequent visitations to the shrines of famous Saints, who are for the most part the deceased

sheikhs of Dervish Orders. A *Ziaret*, as such lesser pilgrimages are termed, is generally undertaken in fulfilment of a vow, or for relief from sickness or other distress, in obedience to the traditional sayings of the Prophet, 'If thou art perplexed in thine affairs, go seek assistance from the inhabitants of the tombs,' and 'If thine heart be oppressed with sorrow, go seek consolation at the graves of holy men.' They are usually made on the *Mevlud*, or annual feast day of the Saint—should not the circumstances demand immediate recourse to his good offices—when it is customary for suppliants or visitors to bring with them, in addition to gifts in coin or kind, a lamb or fowl for sacrifice, the flesh of which constitutes the perquisite of the guardian of the *turbah*, who is generally a Dervish. Benefits which are believed to have resulted from the intercession of the Saint are gratefully acknowledged by wealthy recipients with gifts of rich shawls as coverings for the catafalque which stands over the resting-place of the holy dead.

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